

Pope
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POPE

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

EDITED WITH A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION
AND FULL EXPLANATORY NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

Life of Pope (1688-1744)

Alexander Pope was born in Lombard Street, London, on May 21, 1688. He was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. His father was a linen-merchant, who married as his second wife Edith Turner, a lady of respectable Yorkshire family, and of some fortune, made a competence, and retired to a small property at Binfield, near Windsor. On account of his religion, young Pope was denied the privilege of education at a first class school, but his studious nature did much to supplement the desultory schooling he received at the hands of local priests and tutors. A severe illness when he was still young undermined his health, and he developed a physical deformity. These infirmities, allied to his susceptible temperament, made his life "one long disease." Though never a profound or accurate scholar, he had a good knowledge of Latin, and a working acquaintance with Greek. By 1704 he had written a good deal of verse, which attracted the attention of Wycherley, who introduced him to town life and to other men of letters. In 1709 his 'Pastorals' were published in Tonson's 'Miscellany', and two years later 'The Essay on Criticism' appeared, and was praised by Addison in the 'Spectator'. 'The Rape of the Lock', a brilliant satire on the fashionable life of his time, in the following year, only enhanced his reputation and he was soon regarded as the leading poet of the time. It won him a connection with the chief literary figures of the age, Gay, Swift, Steele, Addison and Congreve, and he became a member of the Scribbler's Club.

Pope's industry was untiring, and his literary output almost continuous until his death. In 1713 'Windsor Forest' and 'The Temple of Fame' appeared, and in 1715 the translation of the 'Iliad' was begun and the work was published at intervals between that year and 1720. It won enormous popularity and brought the poet £ 5000. It was followed by 'Odyssey' (1725-26), in which he had the assistance of Broome and Fenton, who, especially the former, caught his style so exactly as almost to defy identification. The translation was really popular, and increased Pope's gains to about £ 8000, which placed him in a position of independence.

The year 1725 was to see the beginning of that period in Pope's career which was to make him famous as a moralist and a satirist. He prepared his famous attack on Grub Street and in May, 1728, appeared 'The Dunciad', a Heroic Poem in Three Books. In this book with savage fury Pope lashed at the small wits and poetasters, and some of a different quality, who had, or whom he supposed to have, injured him. Theobald became the central Dunce, around whom circled, like satellites round a plane, some hundred other contemporary Dunces. The book, of course, created a sensation, but so brilliant was the style, so elfin the maliciousness, that the Grub Street hacks were immortalized rather than extinguished by Pope's satirical wit.

Between 1731 and 1735 he produced his 'Epistles', the last of which, addressed to Arbuthnot, is also known as the Prologue to the Satires', and contains his ungrateful characterisation of Addison under the name of 'Atticus'; and also the 'Essay on Man' (1733) written under the influence of Bolingbroke. This poem was intended to form part of a series of philosophic poems in which human nature was to be surveyed on a systematic plan.

The Satires collected under the title of 'Imitations of Horace' were published between the years 1733 and 1738, and these marked the close of Pope's poetical career. A naturally delicate constitution, a deformed body, extreme sensitiveness, over-excitement, and over-work did not promise a long life, and Pope died on may 30, 1744, aged 56.

"His (Pope's) position as a poet has been the subject of much contention among critics, and on the whole is lower than that assigned him by his contemporaries and immediate successors. Of the higher poetic qualities, imagination, sympathy, insight, and pathos, he had no great share; but for the work which in his original writings, as distinguished from translations, he set himself to do, his equipment was supreme, and the medium which he used—the heroic couplet—he brought to the highest technical perfection of which it is capable. He wrote for his own age, and in temper and intellectual and spiritual outlook, such as it was, he exactly reflected and interpreted it. In the forging of condensed, pointed, and sparkling maxims of life and criticism he has no equal, and in painting a portrait Dryden alone is his rival; while in 'The Rape of the Lock' he has produced the best mock-heroic poem

in existence. His extreme vanity and sensitiveness to criticism made him often vindictive, unjust and venomous. They led him also into frequent quarrels, and lost him many friends, including Lady M. Wortley Montagu, and along with a strong tendency to finesse and stratagem, of which the circumstances attending the publication of his literary correspondence is the chief instance, make his character on the whole an unamiable one. On the other hand he was often generous ; he retained the friendship of such men as Swift and Arbuthnot and he was a most dutiful and affectionate son." (A Dictionary of Engish and American Authors by John W. Cousin).

"Pope's quarrelsome disposition arose from his vanity and his excessive sensibility. The latter, increased if not wholly caused by his ill-health, made him irascible beyond measure, and the "wicked wasp of Twickenham," as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu called him, had a venom in his sting that was not soon forgotten by his victims. To his credit must, however, be placed his uninterrupted friendship with Swift and others and his irreproachable conduct as a son. His position as a poet is still the subject of controversy. His technique is beyond praise, and he handled the heroic couplet enlivened by wit and epigram, as no other poet has done. Yet he lacks warmth of emotion, shows no real feeling for nature, and even his finest passages are rhetorical rather than poetic. His fancy was free but his imagination poor. He excelled in condensing an opinion and in stating in epigrammatic form 'what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed." (Concise Universal Biography—ed. by Sir J. A. Hammerton).

The Age of Pope : Age of Prose and Reason

The literature of eighteenth century England is often known as the literature of the 'Augustan Period'. Now this word 'Augustan' is used rather arbitrarily. The phrase is sometimes applied to the whole period during which Pope wrote, sometimes limited to the reign of Queen Anne, and sometimes extended backwards so as to include Dryden. What is beyond controversy, however, is that a change of the widest and deepest sort passed through the whole range of English literature in a time corresponding almost exactly with the Restoration, and in consequence of influences of which for all but forty years Dryden was the supreme literary exponent.

Let us enumerate certain striking characteristics of this

period. We must first of all begin with an examination of the view of life, the attitude of the people toward religious and philosophical problems during this epoch. Literature in the days of Queen Anne naturally expressed the popular dominating ideas about the problems of life. In order to trace the origin of Classicism in this age, we must take into account the prevailing religious and philosophical thoughts. Now these Augustans had a peculiar view of life. Respectability—decent Conformity—these were the watchwords of the Augustans. The view of life bore no resemblance either to that of the Renaissance or of Puritanism. As we all know, boundless imagination, unspeakable aspiration, overflowing enthusiasm were the predominant features of the Elizabethan age. On the other hand vivid realization of the supersensual world, a religious creed full of the symbolism of Hebrew poetry, and a gloom that was as quickening to poetical and religious imagination as it was mortifying to earthly happiness, overshadowed the age of Milton. The Augustans hated enthusiasm and also mystery and religious broodings. This was owing partly to a reaction against Puritanism, and partly to a sceptical indifference, generated by the constant sectarian controversies of the seventeenth century.

We must always remember this curious view of life, with its absence of spontaneous enthusiasm and religious imagination, when considering the literature of the days of Pope. According to Leslie Stephen, the difference between Pope and his predecessors can be easily comprehended when we compare him with Milton and Spenser. Milton and Spenser, according to Stephen, could speak in a familiar symbolism ; but Pope had to bow down to the public opinion of his time and had to take the creed of time.

This period was also remarkable for the influence of the Court on men of letters. As Professor Minto admirably puts it, "The settlement of the long-vexed question of the succession to the Crown made a change in the position of letters that can only be described as a revolution." In order to explain his point, he tells us how the politicians appealed to public opinion in those days. "There was no reporting of political speeches ; there were no daily newspapers with leading articles ; everything was done by means of occasional pamphlets in prose or verse. Now a days, if you wish to know the minds of the leaders of opinion, you read the magazines and the leading

articles in the newspapers. But in the time of Queen Anne, and for half a century before, the work of expressing and enlightening opinion was carried on by means of pamphlets". So naturally there were numerous pamphlets published on behalf of different parties. The nation was divided into two great parties of Whig and Tory, the one eager to keep out, the other to bring back, the exiled family of Stuarts. We can easily see, this being the situation, how existing circumstances affected the position of the men of letters. The man who could write pamphlets, whether in prose or in verse, at once became a person of importance. We all know the story of Addison, who was rewarded with a pension of £ 300 by Lord Halifax for a poem on the Peace of Ryswick.

Another very important aspect of Augustan literature was the exaltation of form over matter. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the reaction against the school of Donne was complete. We can get an idea of the attitude of the intelligentsia of those days toward the Metaphysicals in Pope's letter to his friend Cromwell in 1710, where he writes about Crashaw: "All that regards design, form, fable, which is the soul of poetry; all that concerns exactness, or consent of parts, which is the body, will probably be wanting. Only pretty conceptions, fine metaphors, glittering expressions, and something of a neat cast of verse, which are properly the dresses, gems, or loose ornaments of poetry, may be found in these verses... ...No man can be a true poet, who writes for diversion only. These authors should be considered as versifiers and witty men, rather than as poets."

French influence had much to do with English literature in this relation. French pressure on English thought and expression was wholly in the direction of clearness and restraint. Clearness was exalted above force, raiment above body, brilliancy above depth. The accuracy and care of the authors was not the only force which made Augustan literature clear. The subject matter was also quite light. Men avoided difficult themes.

A great part of Augustan literature was in verse, a style of verse which they themselves had invented and perfected, for in this polished and self-contained society the readers were, in many cases, the writers too. Sometimes these verses were bitter attacks on political enemies; almost all that Swift wrote was of this character. Sometimes, however, the verses were full of flattery, like Gay's "To Mrs. Howard":

"O wonderful creature, a woman of reason,
Never grave out of pride, never gay out of reason."

Sometimes they were really sincere and tender lyrics, like Prior's verses to Lady Margaret Harley when she was 5 years old which began :

"My noble lovely, little Peggy,
Let this, my first Epistle, beg ye
At dawn of morn and close of even,
To lift your heart and hands to heaven."

A few words about the Court in those days may help us in assessing the real value of Augustan literature. We must first of all note that the Court was brilliant like the court of the Restoration. It seems to have been, under Anne and her two successors, almost insufferably dull. Manners were stiff, formal, and ungraceful. Court etiquette was rigidly enforced. Robert Walpole, who was prime Minister from 1721 to 1742, and a very great man in fashionable as well as in political circles was a country squire, coarse and careless in his appearance, his manners, and his conversation. The company which surrounded the Court, consisted of plenty of wits, beauty, and elegance. "Sometimes it was an event of national importance that engaged the attention of this select society, sometimes a trifling social incident. Sometimes they listened with delighted interest to pithy reflections on manners and morals, or with even keener relish to biting satires in the form of fable or allegory. But in every one of the dishes thus presented to them it was the flavour of personality, subtle or pronounced as the case might be, that pleased their specialized taste, When Addison published 'The Campaign', it was the lines that glorified Marlborough rather than those which glorified the country which won him the favour of the highly placed Tories of Queen Anne's day. When Pope wrote his 'Essay on Man', it was admired not because it gave new light on Man's nature and possibilities, but because it expressed tersely and clearly the fashionable ideas on religion and morality. Gay's "Beggar's Opera" made the greatest hit, as far as this highest class was concerned by the witty, venomous reperesentation of Walpole and Townshed in the 'Roles' of rival ruffians". (Amy Cruse).

Another important characteristic of the Augustan age was the belief that literature must follow nature. Nature, of course, was in a different sense from what was

meant by Wordsworth and Coleridge. By the term 'Follow Nature' the Classicists meant an exact reproduction of every-day life and manners, as opposed to anything wild or extra-vagant, or that existed only in the writer's imagaination. Courthope gives an admirable analysis of this motto of the Classicists in the explanation of Pope's 'Essay on Criticism': "Three main principles underlie Pope's reasoning : (1) That all sound judgment and true 'wit' is founded on the obser-vation of Nature ; (2) That false 'wit' arises from a disregard of Nature and an excessive affection for the connections of the mind ; (3) That the true standard for determining what is 'natural' in poetry is to be found in the best work of the ancients." This gives us the Augustan standard of criticism in a nutshell. The Augustans had no intention of describing flowers and trees and the changes of the season ; or even of using the language of common life. Their only aim was to copy the men and manner of polite society. They avoided everything smacking of emotion.

But in what sense exactly was Augustan literature classical ? According to some critics it would be more correct to regard the literature of the age as pseudo-classic. As has often been said, it was "more Latin than Greek, and more French than Latin." The literature of the school of Pope was painfully self-conscious ; we must not in this connection confuse self-consciousness and subjectivity. "Romanticism is often sub-jective, full of the passion and aspiration of the individual compose : pseudo-classicism is self-conscious, in that the author is constantly observing and laboriously polishing his own workmanship." Phelps says, "If we try to find out any resemblance in this literature to Greek classicism we may be dissapointed. Except in its clearness of expression and of thought, in its repression of emotion, in its faithful obedience to critical rules, and in its intellectuality and enthronement of Reason, the literature of the age of Pope had nothing more to do with Greek Classical Age." As Professor Beers states, "Its (the Augustan age) sole Latin master was Horace, not Horace in his Odes, but in his Epistles and Satires and even that Horace as seen through the spectacles of Boileau".

A very interesting feature of Augustan literature was the representation of town life as supreme over country life. In fact, the literature of Augustan England was a literature of the town, born in the town, written mainly for the town,

and often portraying the life of the town to the minutest detail. the London of Pope is even more wonderfully alive to the students of English literature than the London of Shakespeare. We can almost see as we read, its ill-paved streets with their narrow sidewalks and their running gutters ; Grub Street where obscure authors fought with debts and starvation, is conjured up before our eyes ; the Fleet (The Prison and the Fleet liberties where clandestine marriages took place) ; the gay boating party on the Thames ; the pleasure gardens where society drank and flirted, listened to the music, and exclaimed at the fireworks—all these appear to be happenings of yesterday, as we read Pope's poems. All that gay, restless, animated life is still before us ; the beauty in her sedan chair, the beau with his lace ruffles and his flowing wig : and we can imagine the courtly presentation of the snuff-box or the flutter of the fan. But this brilliant surface was but a thin veneer, and beneath it life was vulgar, vicious and cruel. The literary monarchs had no fascination for the country ; the drawing-room, the theatre and the coffee-house absorbed all their interest. Let us glance through a letter from Pope to Mrs. J. Cowper, written in 1722, where he says : "I......wish you may love the town......these many years. It is time enough to like or affect to like, the country, when one is out of love without one's self."

We must remember too that satire was a characteristic of Queen Anne literature. This was naturally to be expected, since the cold, hard worldliness of Augustan life found its natural expression in polished wit and satire ; and the sarcasm was not directed against Sin, but against Dullness and Unconventionality—another bad sign. Satire came to be the fashion among people, so that poets who had nothing to write about started composing satires. They had no object to satirise, but they wrote just for the sake of writing. In one of his letters Pope writes : "People seek for what they call wit, on all subjects, and in all places ;......". This Led Pope to write statires. For Pope really had occasional touches of emotion and imagination, which, in another age, he would have fostered rather than repressed. Indeed we feel that Pope would have been another man in a different age.

Let us, in conclusion, discuss in brief the general attitude of the Classicists towards old English writers and towards anything savouring of Romanticism. According to Phelps, "The

rank and file of the Classicists regarded the old English writers not with absolute contempt, but with indifferences. This indifference arose usually from ignorance." Outside of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Spenser and Milton, the rest of the old English writers were buried in the dust-heaps of the past. Shakespeare, even though admired, was not very widely read. The splendour and the exuberance of the Elizabethan drama was something alien to the Augustan stage. We can easily guess how Shakespeare fared in the hands of these people, if we glance through a letter from Dr. Atterbury to Pope, where he writes : "I have found time to read some parts of Shakespeare......I protest to you in a hundred places I cannot construe him. I do not understand him. There are allusions in him to a hundred things, of which I know nothing and can guess nothing." How Milton was regarded even by these intellectuals may be seen by another letter from Atterbury, where he writes about Milton's 'Samson Agonistes' ; and requests Pope to "review and polish that piece (the poem)". One could hardly expect Romantic litetature to find favour with the Augustans.

A few words more on the material aspect of this age. "The growth of trade and capitalism under Queen Anne produced a literature whose distinguishing quality was materialism and the 'good sense' of bourgeois deceney......No thought, Monsieur Boil eau taught them, could be valuable of which good sense was not the ground-work." (Philip Henderson.) Christopher Caudwell throws more light on this aspect of the age : "Elizabethan insurgence, the voice of primitive accumulation, thus turns into its opposite Augustan propriety, the voice of manufacture. Individualism gives place to good taste." We must remember the political nature of the eighteenth century. Labour was still short ; so the rising manufacturers, the bourgeoisie had to ally themselves with the agricultural capitalist (the Whig 'aristocrat') in order to maintain the law and restrictions which would keep down the price of labour and enable it to develop through the stage of manufacture. The poetry of the age naturally reflects a belief in the rightness and permanence of forms and restrictions, good taste and an upper class "tone".

Pope's Poetry

Pope's literary works fall naturally into three divisions or periods : (i) The poems by which he acquired his reputation, his "Pastorals," his "Windsor Forest," his "Essay on Criticism,"

his "Rape of the Lock,"—all written during the reign of Queen Anne ; (ii) his translations of Homer by which he enlarged his reputation and his fortune, his principal occupation during the reign of George I ; (iii) the satirical and moral poems, with which he crowned his reputation, and seriously compromised his character. Besides thus groping his literary works, we can also analyse two main epochs in Pope's writings. Circumstances naturally interfered materially with the direction of his poetic labours, and two important epochs or turning points can be distinctly specified. The first was when his early successes made him independent of the influences of his father's family and he turned to the very different world of London, translation of Homer was direct result of this change in his life. The translation was definitely a money-making enterprise, instigated by the worldly spirit that then passed into him from new and fashionable acquaintances. The second epoch in Pope's life was when his independence had been secured by the success of his translations of his friends, Arbuthnot, Swift, and Bolingbroke, and relegated his powers to the service of personal and party strife.

Pope spent eight or nine years in arduous and enthusiastic discipline, reading, studying, experimenting, poetry his only business and idleness his only pleasure, before anything of his appeared in print. When Pope was about sixteen, he made the acquaintance of Wycherley, then an elderly man about town, following him with all the devotion than a bookish boy with literary aspirations naturally feels towards a successful man of letters. In a short time he had become known to Steele, Addison, Swift and other great authors of the day. His first literary venture was the publication of the 'Pastorals' (1709), a series of eclogues, treating of the four seasons. Pastoral poems in those days were hopelessly artificial and Pope's pastorals were no exception to the rule. According to the classical canon and precedent 'Strephon' and 'Daphnis' contend as 'Thyrsis' mourns the death of Daphne. Heathen song and godliness are domesticated in England, and Apollo is to be gladdened by the sacrifice of a "milk-white bull" near the banks of the Thames. But the really notable thing about the 'pastorals' is not their artificiality,—which is only what might have been expected,—but the even flow of the verse.

Between the years 1709 and 1715 falls the most varied and

active period of Pope's personal life and literary career. It extends from the publication of the 'Pastorals' to that of the first volume of his Iliad. Pope's 'Essay on Criticism' published in 1711, took London by storm. He wrote the 'Essay on Criticism' for the entertainment of the cultivated people of his age, men and women who were supposed to be learned in his time, who affected great interest in the art of poetry. It belongs to the class of poems called Didactic, but the object of such poems is not instruction, even when they state and illustrate rules of conduct. The object of poetry is to give immediate pleasure. Pope's purpose, accordingly, was to condense, methodise, and give as perfect and novel expression as he could to floating opinions about the poet's aims and methods, aud the critic's duties too :

"What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed."

The work excellently served its primary purpose of giving pleasure of the town. As we have seen already in our discussion about Pope's age, it was an age of criticism, an age when men sought to write according to the classic precedents, and Pope's poem was in accord with the mood of the time.

In 1712, Pope published the first version of 'The Rape of the Lock' a poem, so graceful, delicate, cynical and witty, that it seems to embody not only the peculiar flavour of his genius, but the light tone and shifting colours of his time. We need not go into details regarding the work just now, since it is the subject of a more detailed discussion which will occupy us later on. It will suffice to say that 'The Rape of the Lock' introduces us to a little world of frivolity and fashion, busy with its pleasures, its dressing, flirting, and card-playing, in the old London of Queen Anne. Pope was representative of this narrow petty world. Town was supreme ; and Pope, the poet of town, represented its supremacy.

'The Rape of the Lock' was followed by 'Windsor Forest' and other short poems ; and about 1713 Pope settled down in earnest to the great task of his middle life, the translation of Homer. The publication of Pope's Homer constitutes one of the most noteworthy episodes of his entire career. It thoroughly established him in the foremost rank among the writers of his age, it brought him a competent fortune, it secured him a circle of friends which he could henceforth widen at his own choice, it involved him in the bitterest and most lamentable dispute of his life. Everyone knows the verdict on this work

of the great scholar Dr. Bentley : "A very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but it is not Homer." In repeating this, we are too apt to forget that the first part of the criticism is as true as the last.

Pope made about five or six thousand pounds by his translation of the Iliad alone, a very large sum for those days ; and he determined to invest a part of this money in a house and grounds at Twickenham, on the bank of the Thames, about twelve miles above London. One important effect of the translation on Pope's own career and on the literature of the time, is to be noted. From the publishers and from his sales to subscribers Pope obtainted more than eight thousand pounds in all. It made Pope independent of patronage and politics, and it marks the opening of a new era in the social status of authors, one in which they looked to the public alone for support and do without patrons.

The Twickenham grotto and gardens became meanwhile one of the delights of Pope's life ; here he received the visits of his friends and dispensed his temperate hospitality. Here came John Gay, the poet, and the great and terrible Dean Swift ; here, Pope tells us, the brilliant Lord Bolingbroke, "nobly pensive, meditated in his "Egerian grot."

But Pope's success had excited the envy of less fortunate authors ; his disposition, and in part his religion, had made him many enemies. With his insatiable vanity and his high strung organization. Pope was easily touched to passionate resentment. He attacked his adversaries, many of whom were beneath notice, in his famous satire of the "Dunciad," or, "Epic of the Dunces" The hero of "Dunciad" was one Lewis Theobald, who dared to attack Pope's poems.

We may enjoy the "Dunciad" simply as a work of humorous imagination. We may even wink at the tendency of the author's imagination to carry him into physically disgusting incidents. Pope's original design seems to have been to describe the progress of Dullness from ancient times to his own generation, ascribing all the disasters that happened to learning, such as the burning of the Library of Alexandria and the irruption of the Goths into the Roman empire, as due to the settled and resolute hostility of this goddess, bent upon restoring the dominion that she held while the intellectual world was still in chaos. In its plan, the 'Dunciad' bears some resemblance to Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe", but it shows more personal spite,

and less careless power. Dryden regards his victim with an air of assured superiority and amused unconcern, but Pope shrieks out his unsavoury abuse as one who engages in a street fight on equal terms. He employs satire rather as an instrument of revenge in a private quarrel than as a corrector of any public wrong.

The closing period of Pope's literary career contains some of his strongest and maturest work : his philosophical poem, "The Essay on Man", "The Moral Essays", "The Imitations of Homer", "The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot." As regards the origin or suggestion of these poems, they are as much due to the influence of Bolingbroke as the "Dunciad" was to Swift and Arbuthnot.

Pope's "Essay on Man" is in reality an application of common sense to the problems of the universe and to the life of man. The first epistle is concerned with man's place in nature ; the second with individual ethics ; the third with the origin of society and politics ; the fourth with the question of man's happiness. In all four appear the rationalism of the century, its satisfaction with things as they are, its trust in downright utility. In short, The Essay on Man' is a marvellous collection of aphorisms, pointing neatly and exactly the peculiarities and prejudices of the age of which Pope was so eminently the voice.

Let us begin a critical analysis of Pope's works with a note by Lord Byron. "Neither time, nor distance, nor age," writes Byron in 1821, "can ever diminish my veneration for him who is the great moral poet of all times, of all climes, of all feelings, and of all stages of existence.........His poetry is the book of life. Without canting and yet without neglecting religion, he has assembled all that a good and great man can gather together of moral wisdom clothed in consummate beauty......A thousand years will roll away before such another can be hoped for in our literature.

Indeed, Pope is the foremost of English classical poets, if the term be correatly applied to school which sought in the masterpieces of ancient times the starting point of their own literary development. This classical taste which prevailed in Pope's youth was not of a national origin. French classicism, a bastard birth, had been transplanted to English soil, and though it could not be acclimatised without undergoing many modifications in accordance with the national peculiarity of

England, yet it remained an exotic and unnatural growth. In his own original poetry, Pope naturally formed his taste among the moderns, upon those in whom he found the so-called classical element in predominance, and among the ancients in those most capable of assimilation to the conception of classical poetry which the age of his predecessors had derived at second-hand. The models which he consistently followed, however, were recommended to him by more than an ordinary acceptance of the prevailing canons of taste. He thought Statius the best of all the Latin poets after Virgil : and perhaps even the exception of the latter was merely conventional. Among the Italians he preferred Tasso to Ariosto ; and the preference is equally significant.

No one who aspires to reach the heart and brain of the eighteenth century can neglect the study of him : of the man in and through his works. He is its foremost representative. Of a large field in its development he was, in fact, owner and creator. He set the world of fashion of the age before us in 'The Rape of the Lock', he unveiled the jealousy, recriminations, and wretchedness of its literary class in the 'Dunciad', he made himself the mouth-piece of one of its leading philosophers in the 'Essay on Man'. He illustrates its desire for perfection of style, its cynical disbelief in the possibility of virtue in man or woman. His world was certainly narrow and ignoble ; but, such as it was, he interpreted it with the minuteness and truth of a great artist.

We touched upon the subject of Pope's attitude toward the ancients just before. Let us now try to analyse it fully. At first sight, it seems that Pope was subject to narrow and exclusive rules of criticism, that he was slavishly subservient to the ancients, writing only according to these precedents, and that, consequently, his poetry was dull and artificial and wanting in nature. But this is partly wrong. Reverence for the ancients, more particularly for the Roman ancients, Virgil and Horace, was undoubtedly an influence in the time of Pope ; but it was only a slight influence then, and in the subsequent generations of the century it was not an influence at all.

Pope, in his poems, very craftily qualifies his subservience to the ancients. Their rules must be observed, but then their rules are very vague and general ; there is much in the poet's art that they cannot teach ; and even if they are broken, success justifies the transgressor :—

"Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.
Music resembles poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.
If where the rules not far enough extend
(Since rules were made but to promote their end),
Some lucky licence answer to the full
Th' intent propos'd, that license is a rule.
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

This is surely a sufficient declaration of independence. Obey their rules when it suits you. Pope thus was wise enough to depart from the ancients he chose. Even his translation of Homer was a very free translation. We may bear in our minds in this connection, Bentley's remark: "A very fine poem, Mr. Pope, but it is not Homer."

The defects in Pope's poems which seem to be so glaring, do not spring from any slavish submission to the ancients. It was not the heroic couplet, nor the demand for rhetorical brilliancy that kept so much of Pope's poetry at a low level. Nor will it do to say that the eighteenth century was an age of prose. The main defects of his poetry can be traced to one source—the character of the audience for whose judgment the Augustan poets had respect, by whose ideals they were controlled, who were to them the arbiters of taste. "The standard of taste in the time of Queen Anne, and till near the end of the century, was a self-consciously aristocratic and refined society, self-conscious of their superior manners and superior culture, and disposed to treat the ways of the vulgar with amused contempt. This, I think, can be shown to be at the root of the striving after wit and the respect for established models, and the false theory of poetic diction in serious poetry. Fear of being vulgar, fear of being singular,—these were the real nightmares that sat upon eighteenth-century poetry."—(William Minto).

Whenever discussing Pope, we must remember, at the outset, that certain sources of power were denied him, partly in consequence of the nature of the period in which he lived, partly by reason of the deficiencies of his own temperament.

The age was one in which sympathy with nature and with humanity was limited, and in this matter Pope shared the blindness of his age. Moreover, Pope was from birth sickly and feeble; his bodily ailments checked the growth of his character. Accordingly we miss in his poetry greatness of feeling for the natural world and for the world of man, as well as greatness of human personality. That such a man should become a poet at all is as wonderful as that a deaf man should be a composer, or a blind man a sculptor. That he should be the typical poet of his age shows how limited was the conception which then prevailed of the nature and function of poetry.

Another very important aspect of Pope's poetry is his use of the heroic couplet. "Pope's exatraordinary mastery of a certain refinement on the Drydenian couplet, which, losing not a little strength and colour, and something of that portion of the poetic vogue which Dryden retained, added an incomparable lightness and polish, seems to have been attained very early. In the 'Essay on Criticism' it is nearly advanced, if no quintet as sure as in the satires of thirty years later. The secret, so far as there is a single one, is the gradual discarding of all licenses and easements in the couplet itself— triplets and Alexandrines, the 'enjambment' which even Dryden some times permitted himself, and the structure of the paragraph by any other than sense-methods"—(Saintsbury). Pope, however, has been charged with monotony in his management of the heroic couplet. But, far from being monotonous, he was extraordinarily dexterous in varying the music of his verse within the limit he had set himself. The effect is due to change in pause and beat, judicious attention to the number of syllables in his words, with an unobtrusive employment of every degree of alliteration and of what may be called the opposite of alliteration, as in

"Eyes the calm sunset of thy various day."

occurring in 'Epistle to Robert Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer.'

The most serious fault which we can detect in Pope's poems is that his ear, for time was not so delicate as his sense of rhythm. When all allowance has been made for the pronunciation of his day, there still remain a large number of unsatisfactory rhymes. Weakness, too, is shown in the repetition of the same set of rhymes after so short an interval, and the

employment of others too close in sound to those immediately preceding.

Satire and Pope's Use of it

In order to have a proper analysis of Pope's use of satire, we must have a rough idea of satire and its history.

Now, satire comes from the Latin "satura lanx", which is the name of a plate filled with the various first-fruits of the year, offered in ancient times, to the goddess Ceres. From this fact, satire came to mean a sort of miscellany, and it was at first written partly in verse and partly in prose, and was full of scurrility and abuse. It was only gradually that it gained in dignity, and abuse gave place to correction of vices.

In Roman literature Juvenal and Horace are the most famous satirists in verse. The former's satire is pointed, full of force and, not seldom, savage; Horace's irony is more graceful and easy; which he hides with a smile.

Medieval England produced two great examples of satire in Chaucer and Langland. The typify at the outset the two classes into which Dryden divided English satirists—the followers of Horace's way and the followers of Juvenal's—the men of the world, who assail the enemies of commonsense with the weapons of humour and sarcasm; and the prophets who assail vice and crime with passionate indignation and invective scorn. Since Dryden's time neither line has died out, and it is still possible with all reserve to recognize the two strains through the whole course of English literature; the one represented in Chaucer, Donne, Marvell, Addison, Arbuthnot, Swift, Young, Goldsmith, Canning, Thackeray, and Tennyson; the other in Langland, Skelton, Lyndsay, Nash, Marston, Dryden, Pope, Churchill, Johnson, Junius, Burns and Browning.

Langland was a naive medieval Juvenal. The object of his great poem was to secure through the latitude afforded by allegory, opportunities of describing the life and manners of the poorer classes, of inveighing against clerical abuses and the capacity of the friars, of denouncing lazy workmen and sham beggars—in a word, to lash all the numerous forms of falsehood, which are practised everywhere at all times. In spite of many essential differences, it is not difficult for us to find here a striking likeness to the work of the Roman Juvenal? Langland's satire is not so fiery as that of his prototype, but it is

less profoundly despairing. He satirizes evil rather by exposing it and contrasting it with good, than by vehemently denouncing it. His prophetic spirit finds expression in the figure of the great reformer, Piers, the Plowman, who was to remedy all abuses and restore the world to a right condition.

Contrast with this the humorous brightness, the laughter, and the light of the sorrounding associated with his great contemporary Geoffrey Chaucer. His very satire is kindly and quaint, like that of Horace, rather than bitterly acidulous.

After Chaucer and Langland, we must look to the poems of William Dunbar, Sir David Lyndsay, and others, to preserve the apostolic succession of satire. William Dunbar is one of the greatest of English satirists. His "Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins," is a bitter indictment of the utter corruption of all classes in the society of his period. So to name all the writers who, in this fruitful epoch of English literature, devoted themselves to this kind of composition would be impossible. Perhaps the finest satire which distinguished the Elizabethan era was the "*Argenis*" of John Barclay, a politico-satiric romance.

During the Parliamentry War, the character of satire underwent a change. It became to a large extent a medium for sectarian bitterness. In a few instances, however, a higher note was struck, as, for example, when "dignified political satire" in the hands of Andrew Marvell, was utilized to fight the battle of freedom of conscience in the matter of the observances of external religion. "The Rehearsal transposed," "Mr. Smirkee," etc., are masterpieces of lofty indignation mixed with grave and ironical banter.

The 'Hudibras' of Samuel Butler in its mingling of broad, almost extravagant, humour and sneering mockery has no parallel in English literature. Butler and others simply prepared the way for the man who is justly regarded as England's greatest satirist. The epoch of John Dryden has been fittingly styled the "Golden Age of English Satire." The Elizabethan period was perhaps richer, numerically speaking, in representatives of certain types of satirical composition, but the true perfection, the efforescence of the long growing plant, if we are allowed to use that expression, was reached in that era which extended from the publication of Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel" in 1681 to the issue of Pope's "Dunciad" in

1742. During these sixty years appeared the choicest of English satires; Dryden's finest pieces, "The Medal", "Mac Flecknoe"; Swift's "Tale of a Tub"; all Defoe's works too, as Steele's in the "Tatler" and Addison's in the "Spectator," Arbuthnot's "History of John Bull", Churchill's "Rosciad", and finally Pope's Poems.

But satire during this 'succession' did not remain absolutely the same. She changed her garb with her epoch. Thus the robust bludgeoning of Dryden and Shadwell, of Defoe and Steele, gave place to the sardonic ridicule of Swift, and polished raillery of Arbuthnot, and the sarcasm of Pope. In this connection, we should note the tremendous influence of the French critic and satirist Boileau, on the writers.

We have to deal now with Pope as a satirist. Pope is the disciple of Dryden, and the best qualities of the Drydenic satire, in both form and matter, are reproduced in his works, accompanied by special attributes of his own. Like Shakespeare, Pope so improved all he borrowed that he has in some instances actually received credit for inventing what he only took from his great master. Pope was more of a refiner and polisher of telling satiric forms which Dryden had in the first instance employed, than an original inventor.

It would be a rather difficult task to mention all the types of satire affected by this marvellously acute and variously cultured Poet. There are few amongst the principal forms which he has not essayed. In spirit he is more pungent and sarcastic, more acidulous and malicious, than the large-hearted and generous-souled Dryden. In his satire, therefore, we find a greater element of personal dislike and contempt than in the case of the other. While satire is present more or less in nearly all Pope's verse, there are certain compositions where it may be said to be the outstanding quality. These are his "Satires", among which should of course be included "The prologue" and "The Epilogue" as well as the "Moral Essays", and finally the "Dunciad". These comprise the best of his professed satires. His "Satires and Epistles of Horace Imitated" are supposed to be an adaptation, to English scenes, sympathies, sentiments, and surroundings, of the Roman poet's characteristic style. Though Pope has quite as many points of affinity with Juvenal as with Horace, the adaptation and transference of the local atmosphere from Tiber to Thames is managed with extraordinary skill. The "Satires" are written from the

point of view of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, the great Whig minister. They display the concentrated essence of bitterness towards the ministerial policy. As Minto tersely puts it, we see gathered up in them the worst that was thought and said about the government and court party when men's minds were heated almost to the point of civil war. For caustic bitterness, sustained but polished irony, and merciless sarcastic malice, the characters of Attcus (Addison), Bufo, and Sporus have never been surpassed in the literature of political and social criticism.

There is a view that Pope's motives for writing the "Dunciad" were purely spiteful and personal; that as soon as his hands were free from his translation of Homer, and his independence secured by the profits of that work, he proceeded to settle old scores with those who had not spoken as favourably as he liked about his poetry. There is strong justification for this view in the fact that the most prominent persons ridiculed in the "Dunciad" can be shown to have given him offence. Theobald, the original hero of the poem, had criticised Pope's edition of Shakespeare rather insolently. Cibber had ridiculed a play in which Pope in his earlier days had some share. Dennis was an old enemy. Lintot, the publisher, had accused him of unfair practices in the division of the profits of the "Odyssey" which proved less successful than the "Iliad."

Was it, then personal spite, the vindictiveness of wounded vanity, as some critics suggest, or was it, as he professed himself, "the thought that he had now some opportunity of doing good," that moved Pope to write the "Dunciad'? The truth probably lies between the two views. Both motives may have operated, as well as a third not so obvious,—an unscrupulous love of fun; and delight in the creations of a humorous imagination. "Certainly to represent the "Dunciad" as the outcome of mere personal spite is to give an exaggerated idea of the malignity of Pope's disposition, and a wrong impression of his character. He was not a morose, savage, indignant satirist, but airy and graceful in his malice, writing more in fun than in anger, revengeful perhaps, and excessively sensitive, but restored to good humour, as he thought over his wrongs by the ludicrous conceptions with which he invested his adversaries.........He loved his own comic fancies more than he hated his enemies. His fun at the expense of his victims was so far cruel that he was quite regardless of their sufferings,

probably enjoyed them ; but it was an impish and sprite-like cruelty, against which we cannot feel any real indignation, because it is substantially harmless, while its ingenious antics never fail to amuse"—(William Minto).

The first impression of Pope is of a satirist visiting the blame for his many infirmities and privations on the whole of society, and finding in his habitual metre an instrument dedicated to his vindictiveness. It is indisputable, indeed, that he commonly used criticism as a hangman's noose. But in a fine, if chequered nature like his, a spring of tenderness is hardly to be expected.

We should also take into account, in this connection, Pope's physical constitution. From the day of his birth Pope was weak and sickly in body ; and the extreme sensibility of his nerves, the feebleness of his digestive organs, and the general fragility of his constitution, made his life, in his own phrase, a long disease. In boyhood he nearly sank under the influence of an uncontrollable hypochondria ; such indulgences of town life as he afterwards permitted himself had speedily to be relinquished ; in middle age he was dependent for ordinary comfort on the constant care of women. He was bald and deformed and almost a dwarf ; his wearing-apparel had to be stiffened here and padded there ; and his bodily wants were in consequence those of a child and his habits those of a valetudinarian. If his treatment of his maladies was sometimes petulant and sometimes unwise, his friends might have spared posterity their anecdotes of these inevitable failings ; nor need Dr. Johnson, of all men, have gravely recorded the fact that Pope 'loved too well to eat.' Naturally such a physical constitution highly affected the progress of his literary career. His frail machine was heavily over-engined ; and the body reacted on the mind. Hence this mixture of feverish ambition and morbid timidity, the self-consciousness which he could rarely shake off, the dissatisfaction with even his own best work that would never let him leave it alone, the fastidiousness which was not kept under control by either his pride or his good sense. Thus a genius which in a healthier and happier nature might have expanded magnificently, failing to find outlet, festered inwardly, became toxic, poisoned his life, and infected his poetry.

Let us see what Louis Cazamian has to say about Pope's satires : "It is in 1733 that Bolingbroke advises his friend

(Pope) to enliven his satire by a modernised adaptation of Horace. This method has already been used in France by Boileau and in England by Rochester, Oldham, and Swift; Pope discovers in it a fit instrument for his verse, and employs it with delightful effects. His ironic praise of George II, under the crushing name of "Augustus," is a masterpiece. The after-taste of parody so natural to classical art is here commingled with the intellectual pleasure which accrues from the continual sense of the relations, of the suggested and implicit analogies of differences, between the present and the past..................Underneath disguised names, or recognisable initials, Pope has left us the picture gallery of all his enmities and his hatreds."

We may mention in conclusion that Pope was different as a satirist from his teacher. Dryden regards his victim with an air of assured superiority and amused unconcern, but Pope shrieks out his unsavoury abuse as one who engages in a street-fight on equal terms. He pitilessly uncovers the miseries of the obscure literary hack, starving in his garret; "he revels," says Thackeray, "in base descriptions of poor men's want." "What paving stones," exclaims Taine, "to crush flies!"

"The union of tender reference to a more brilliant past, with bitter jealousy against the successful in the present, is the leading contrast which gives life to Pope's satire. In both, in the cherished memories as in the numerous representations, he was equally sincere. This gives a reality to his words which satire has often wanted when directed against social follies in general, or abstract vices. In Juvenal's lines on Hannibal or Alexander we are always conscious of the absence of true passion. The indignation is theatrical. It is not so in Pope. There may be occasional passages of mere vague tirade for the sake of sustaining the character of moral censor. But in his satirical touches he is in earnest, and in his most severe couplets most so. Even what seem random generalities are often expressions of his real feeling. This reality cannot be felt by readers who are only slightly acquainted with the poet's history, and who are not aware how thoroughly Pope was penetrated by party passion. He truly believes that the Whigs are ruining the country, that the Court is a nest of sycophants, that the majority in the House of Peers is corrupt, and the City is made up of 'thieves, supercargos, sharpers, and directors.' The same closely drawn ties which obscured his judgment and con-

fined his sympathy to a clique, save him from one of the defects to which satire is liable, *viz.*, an universal indignation and undirected invective."—(Mark Pattison).

Pope 's Place in English Literature

It is indeed very difficult for readers and critics of this generation to be fair to Pope, either as a poet, or as a man. To most of us he is the spokesman of a dead time, separated from ours by the most fundamental difference in its ideals of literature and of life. In order to understand and properly appreciate Pope, we must try to enter in imagination his age. Pope set the world of fashion of those days before us in "The Rape of the Lock," he unveiled the jealousy, recriminations, and wretchedness of its literary class in the "Dunciad", he made himself the mouthpiece of one of its leading philosophers in the 'Essay on Man.' He illustrates its desire for perfection of style, its cynical disbelief in the possibility of virtue in man or woman. His world was narrow and ignoble ; but, such as it was, he interpreted it with the minuteness and truth of a great artist.

The time has really gone-by for Pope to be ranked among the master geniuses of our literature. In the last of his uncompromising devotees, Lord Byron, we already recognise the note of half-conscious exaggeration usual in the defends of a no longer tenable cause. But with the professional student, his permanence is secure. Critics may attempt to define his limitations and point to his place in the great company of poets ; but, within the range of literary orthodoxy there may be differences. The survival of poets other than the very highest must depend not on their historical value, but on their finding in each generation a body of admirers.

Let us have a rough glance at his achievement in the matter of poetic form. Of this Pope was master. He perfected an English metre, the heroic couplet, which for purposes of didactic and satirical poetry has since remained the chosen vehicle of expression in the English language. The ear is delighted after listening to a page of Pope ; an entire poem is, however, apt to weary by the regularity of the cadence, resembling the march-past of column after column of perfectly-drilled troops. We remember in this connection what Johnson said about Pope—"...a thousand years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope."

But English literature owes him more than these achievements of his—she owes him the effects of self-dedication itself. It was not only that he made war upon those who degraded an art into a trade, and into the vilest of trades. The master passion in his breast was his veneration for what is great and noble in intellectual life, and his loathing for what is small and mean and noxious. He served literature neither for power, like Swift; nor, like nearly all his contemporaries, for place and pay; not even for fame chiefly; but for its own sake. And the acknowledgement due to a noble and life-long devotion should not be grudged to Pope, even by those who look down upon his shortcomings and faults.

The customary belief as to Pope may be summed up thus: that, in virtue mainly of his later work, the "Essay on Man" and the "Satires" and "Epistles", he occupied a place of unique and unchallenged supremacy in English poetry for fifty or sixty years; that this tradition was broken towards the end of the century by the Romantic School; that it finally died with Byron, so far as Byron's own estimate was not a provocative paradox; and that attempts to reinstate it, then and since, have been artificial, like revivals of Queen Anne fashions in architecture or furniture. But both dates and facts of this customary belief are wrong. The romantic revival itself began in Pope's own life-time. Pope won his full fame by his early poetry, which is now generally decried and discredited. This fame was consolidated by his Homer; with his "Iliad," completed by him at the age of thirty-two, it reached its climax. His later work was received by its own generation rather with the respect due to the work of an acknowledged master than with the enthusiasm evoked by a substantive achievement. Thus it is quite evident that Pope had created a school and established a tradition. But neither the school nor the tradition was ever, except as regards technique of versification, dominant over the whole field of English poetry.

If Pope is thought of as a satirist only, satire is, to be sure, not poetry at its highest, is not poetry doing all it can. But Pope was much more than a satirist. Pope is a limited classic, a classic with a difference, within that limit, his poetry is, as only classics are, imperishable. No lapse of time, no change of fashion can abate "that brilliant genius and immense fame." "Those who, while not responding readily to violent emotions, are keenly interested in men and manners with but a chastened

passion for green fields, who can appreciate satire and epigram and have a nice sense of finish, will, in every age, enjoy the poetry of Pope for its own sake."

Critics have brought numerous charges against Pope. It is said that he had no benignity ; he was supposed to have had no feeling for sensuous beauty ; he took no interest in nature. All these might be true ; but if one is to judge poets by what they are without, where is one to end ? One might point out that Wordsworth had no sense of humour, that Shelley did not understand human beings, that Keats could not be Greek, and that Matthew Arnold did not wear a wig. Incidentally, however, there are some remarkable lines in Pope's work which show that he could do very well when he wanted to. Sensuous beauty, for instance can be found in the following line—

> "Die of a rose in aromatic pain."

This was what he wrote about a spider—

> "The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine !
> Feels at each thread, and lives along the line."

Pope could even, when he chose, call up a vision of nature which is unforgettable—

> "Lo ! where Maeotis sleeps, and hardly flows
> The freezing Tanais thro' a waste of snows."

Far from being a scrupulous worshipper of the noble style, Pope was a realist—in thought and expression. He could describe a sordid interior as well as any French novelist—

> "In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung.
> The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
> One once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
> With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
> The George and Carter dangling from that bed
> When tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
> Greak Villiers lies.........."

"The heart of the man was not put into descriptions of physical things ; it was put into descriptions of people whom he disliked. It is in those elaborate characters, in which, through a score of lines or so, the verse rises in wave upon wave of malice, to fall at last with a crash on the devoted head of the victim—in the sombre magnificance of the denunciation of the great dead Duke in the murderous insolence of the attack on the great living Duchess, in the hooting mockery of Bufo, in the devastating analysis of Addison—it is here that Pope's

art comes to its climax.........In the Character of Sporus,...... Pope 'seems to be actually screaming with malignant fury.' ....It is true : Pope seems to be actually screaming ; but let us not mistake. It is only an appearance ; actually, Pope is not screaming at all ; for these are strange impossible screams, unknown to the world of fact—screams endowed with immortality. What has happened then ? Pope has waved his wand. He has turned his screams into poetry, with the enchantment of the heroic couplet."—(Lytton Strachey : 'Leslie Stephen Lecture on Pope.')

Detailed Examination of Pope's Merits and Demerits—his Style, his Heroic Couplet, Etc.

Pope's merits are quite obvious and strike almost every reader ; and his defects are simply the results of these merits too much overdrawn. He was a man of vigorous understanding, and his poetry is "the poetry of good sense." His style is eminently clear, pointed, polished, and sparkling : but is too full of epigram and antithesis. What Pope says of Lord Harvey's style in his *Epistle Dr. Arbuthnot* is not inapplicable to his own :

His wit all see-saw, between *that* and, *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.

It seems to be unconscious reflection on his own style after all. No English poet before him gave so much labour to produce *perfect finish* ; but it is the finish of an engraver, and not of the painter. "He did not care to originate. His business was attractive and lucid expression ; it was to *set* gems not to create them." He is also said to have perfected the couplet ; but this is doubtful. No doubt the couplet which contains its sense complete in the two lines may be said to be perfect in Pope : but its use for narrative has certainly been curtailed by his style of employing it. Pope never used any other metre—except in his *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, but this is the only exception. He adhered to one metre, and made that metre his own. "Pope is the poet of society, the delineator of manners" ; and "wit infused with fancy" is his special merit.

Pope's faults are also on the surface, and lie very open to a reader, who is acquainted with Wordsworth, or Tennyson, or Browning. The age of Pope, as we have noted above was over-

run with a false classicism borrowed from the French, and fundamentally opposed to the pure and simple spirit of the great classic writers themselves. Pope, following this fashion, perfected a *poetical vocabulary*, which every year separated itself further and further from the life and feelings of men, and which in his followers, rose to a ridiculous height of absurdity. Verse-making became a profession, and then a mere trade; and English poetry was very little better than the mosaics of Latin verses made by boys with the epithets and phrases, supplied by the *Gradus ad Parnassum*. Pope's faults are best seen in his followers. These men changed his manner into a mannerism, his occasional pomp into pompousness, and his art into a mere artifice. The three most prominent faults of his verse are:

(a) Too frequent use of antithesis.
(b) An overloading with epithet.
(c) A hard monotony in his verse.

(a) Epigram and antithesis—the love of telling phrases and striking sayings, and not the love of inquiry and of truth—were the dominant vices of Pope's age. Line after line, and page after page, in his poems, are crowded with antithesis.

(b) This ran to an enormous excess in Pope's followers. Here are four lines with eight epithets from Dr. Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*:

The *encumbered* oar scarce leaves the *dreaded* coast
Thro' *purple* billows and a *floating* host.
The *bold* Bavarian in a *luckless* hour.
Tries the *dread* summits of *Caesarian* power.

(c) Pope's use of the heroic couplets is, except for didactic and epigrammatic purposes, very inferior to Chaucer's. Chaucer often breaks his monotony of the rhyme by placing one rhyme in one paragraph, and its brother rhyme in the next; Pope generally completes the sense in the couplet. Chaucer varies Caesura: in Pope it is almost always after the second foot. This will be plain from the following lines—which are only a few out of thousands like them:

Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings?
Or hears thy hawk when Philomela sings?
Man cares for all; to birds he gives his woods,
To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods;
For some his interest prompts him to provide,
For more his pleasure, for yet more his pride.

We have divided the lines above according to the Caesura *i. e.*, the pause or break in the sense occurring in each line. And so it goes on, see-saw, long half up, short half down. This staccato movement gives monotony to Pope's verse. Hazlitt says, "Pope turned Pegasus into a rocking horse." The monotony is not so intolarable and eternal as that of Drayton's lines, but it has a fatiguing effect on the reader. There are very few lines of Pope that could not be printed like the verses above. Ward says well, "An entire poem is apt to weary by the regularity of the cadence. resembling the march past of column after column of perfectly-drilled troops." And the uniform position of the Caesura is the cause of this. In all great poets it is perpetually varied, and its visible symbol is a freely curved line. Its visible symbol in Pope is a straight line. Mark Pattison points out that from the beginning of the seventeenth century a "dissolution of the stuff" has been going on. The long sentences of Hooker, Jeremy, Taylor and Milton, have gradually, in course of two centuries, been broken down into the shorter and more easily understood sentences of Macaulay. In the same way, the long sweep of Spenser's nine-lined stanza gradually gave place to the quatrain of Dryden and Davenant, and then to the couplet—the couplet with its sense contained in itself, and never overflowing.

Pope's merits and faults are so distinctly marked that they may be easily tabulated :

Merits	*Faults*
(a) Exquisite finish.	Highly technical vocabulary.
(b) Stronge common sense.	Too personal satire.
(c) Wit.	Absence of original thinking.
(d) Art.	Artifice.
(e) Smoothness.	Professional sentiments.
(f) Epigrammatic power.	Truth sacrificed to point.
(g) Elegance of rhythm.	Absence of native power of song.
(h) Apt description.	Two many epithets,—etc., etc.

His vocabulary is a limited one not nearly so extensive as Milton's, and amounting to only a fraction of Shakespeare's. In character it is highly abstract ; he uses abstract terms in preference to concrete, even in *The Rape of the Lock.* This is the same as saying that the vocabulary is full of Latin and French words, a habit peculiar to the eighteenth century, and which culminated in Dr. Johnson.

Pope, to sum up, is the poet of society, and of highly polished and elegant society. It is in this direction, therefore, that his merits are to be looked for. He is not profound, but amazingly clever; he does not care so much for the beautiful as for the neat, the elegant, and the conventionally correct. He does not, like Wordsworth, love

> The fields and mountains bare
> And grass in the green fields;

but he is at home in Lady Betty's drawing-room, and equal to the latest gossip there. He does not judge a character fairly; but he takes every opportunity of uttering a "smart" epigram on any one; as, in speaking of Bacon, he calls him,

> 'The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind.'

Not one of these epithets is correct, and the last is simply untrue. But it is difficult to overestimate the extreme neatness of some of his turns. Thus, speaking of a dandy, he says he would:

(a) Die of a rose in aromatic pain.

And this is as true as it is epigrammative:

(b) And not a vanity is given in vain.

Of a stupid person who had made the grand tour:

(c) Europe he saw, and Europe saw him too.

His compliments are perfect. Like all good compliments, they are generally indirect; and their unexpectedness forms another delightful element. He says of the Duke of Buckingham:

(d) Thus gracious Chandos is beloved at sight.

Of another friend:

(e) Would ye be blest? despise low joys, low gains,
Disdain whatever Cornbury disdains,
Be virtuous, and be happy for your pains.

The unexpectedness of the following must have been very pleasant to the Duchess of Bridgewater:

(f) Hence Beauty, waking all her tints, supplies,
An angel's sweetness, or Bridgewater's eyes.

Of his friend *Allen* he writes:

(g) Let humble Allen with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.

But Pope seems to have been brought to his wits' end by his admiration of Bishop Berkeley, the great philosopher :

(h) Manners with candour are to Benson given,
To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.

Reaction against Pope—and Why Pope failed as a Great Poet.

The question whether Pope was a poet was posed by Dr. Johnson. He writes, "It is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet ? otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found ?" There can be little doubt that Dr. Johnson had too much admiration of Pope's poetry—and nobody to-day will take him very seriously. In an essay, published in 1756, Joseph Warton seemed to have questioned Pope's supremacy : "I do not think him at the head of his profession. What is there transcendentally sublime or pathetic in Pope ?" He defines the specific quality of the true poet as "a creative and glowing imagination" ; and this he denies to Pope. Twenty-five years later Warton re-stated his view, implying that he did not mean that Pope was not a great poet but meant that he was not the greatest. This could be evidence only of a counter-reaction in favour of Pope. So reaction and counter-reaction have run as regards Pope's eminence in poetry—and the result has been a shrinkage of his fame.

We may take Leslie Stephen who, a Wordsworthian, has run down Pope. Stephen might be a good judge of thought, moral and character, but had little of the right instinct for the appreciation of poetry. Courthope did something towards re-instating Pope, but it may be doubted whether it had the desired effect. Matthew Arnold denies greatness to Pope : "Dryden and Pope are not classics of our poetry, they are classics of our prose." The qualities of eighteenth century prose are clarity, precision and good sense. And they are equally eminent in the poetry of the age. If they are virtues in prose, they are virtues in poetry too. It will be argued that clarity, precision and good sense cannot be the sole criterion of good poetry—that poetry must have something more, it must be simple, sensuous and impassioned, as Milton puts it. Every generation may not accept Milton's conception of poetry, though it is a fairly adequate one. The eighteenth century poets and critics had a different idea—they thought of good sense as the funda-

mental of poetry. That is one way of looking at poetry—and it is a reaction against the florid diction and high-falutin sentiments of the Elizabethans and the 'metaphysical wit' of Donne and his school. Pope says, "The proper study of Mankind is man." It means that the poets of the eighteenth century were little interested in Nature. But they started with a very restricted idea of 'man'; it is the foibles and fashions of society on which they concentrated. The poetry of 'man' became ultimately drawing-room poetry with the poets of the eighteenth century. In estimating the poetry as the eighteenth century, we cannot, and should not overlook the limitation of the age.

J. W. Mackail makes a right appraisal of Pope's poetry with his gaze fixed upon the age which nourished Pope's genius and evoked his poetry. Mackail writes, "Pope gave to his age......... the kind of poetry that it needed." This is true, and in no disparaging sense. But brilliant as was his success in doing so, one may trace in him from the first an unfulfilled promise, an aspiration beyond any actual accomplishment. Such a gift could not be hid. His contemporaries felt it though they could not well understand it. It is only the existence of such a feeling which accounts for that amazing early conquest which swept him, in spite of every external disadvantage, to his supremacy. "A young poet his name is Pope." Granville wrote when he first appeared on the horizon, "he is not above seventeen or eighteen years of age, and promises miracles." When he was five and twenty, Swift called him the best poet in England. Nor was this a partial and merely insular judgment; for Voltaire, a few years later, writes of Mr. Pope, "the best poet of England and at present of all the world." It is not then astonishing, though it may lead us to revise our point of view, that we find Warton, after Pope's death, and when the first reaction against him was at its height, deliberately expressing the opinion, that "the reputation of Pope as a poet among posterity will be principally owing to his *Windsor Forest*, his *Rape of the Lock* and his *Eloisa to Abelard*."

"To these now we would probably add the *Elegy*. It is curious that Johnson, while he has nothing but praise for the *Eloisa*, says of the *Elegy*, "Poetry has not often been worse employed than in dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl."

"The body of Pope's earlier poetry represented by these pieces has since dwindled in its reputation. The *Pastorlas* by which he made his first fame are generally discredited or igno-

red; more so than a large judgment will fully ratify. They suffer indeed from the mannerism of the period; but much of the condemnation bestowed on them is really condemnation not of them, but of the pastoral as a form of poetry. To that extent it is vitiated by the same failure of understanding, the incapacity to appreciate poetry as art, which is at the root of Johnson's attack on *Lycidas*. The charge of immaturity and conventionality may be, and is, made equally against Virgil's *Eclogues*. Pope's *Pastorals* do not indeed like the *Eclogues* mark the opening of a new age and a new birth for poetry. But we may nevertheless find in them a movement towards revolution, and the accents, still unsustained and uncertain, of a new poetical voice.

> Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade,
> Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into shade;
> Where'er you tread the blushing flower shall rise,
> And all things flourish where you may turn your eyes—

These lines so fine in phrasing, so elastic in rhythm, have become inseparable from the exquisite music to which Handel, wedded them when he took the words for his opera of *Semele* But their own faultless melodiousness melts into Handels music like a tune unto a tune. If we compare them with Pope's own extant first draft, we shall realise how from the first he was, what Warton denied, a great "inventor" (as we should now say, an imaginative creator) as well as a great improver. And from this we shall be led on to see, more largely, how, great as his achievement is, his aim and ambition were greater; how they imply, and sometimes touch, those heights of poetry which are trodden by the immortals alone.

"For such soaring flights of song the age indeed was not propitious; though, if we look a little deeper, perhaps no age is. In our poetry, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson all make the same complaint to their age............A fine and true account of what Pope did for English poetry is given by himself in a piece where he is throughout at his best, the *Imitation of the Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace*. What is needed, after the comparative anarchy of the previous century, was discipline. That requirement Pope met and fulfilled, but in a sense, he spent himself in doing so. The reaction against lawless romanticism, like all such reactions overshot its mark; it passed, even in Pope himself, and more disastrously in the school of those who had his tune by heart, down to the final

degradation of Darwin and Hayley, into an academic and devitalised classicism ; he is an authentic classic, and in that sense in which the finest classical poetry includes and absorbs romance. And for Pope at his finest—by which, I mean, at his poetically highest-we have to go not to the *Satires* and *Epistles*, but to the work to his early and middle period ; oftener than is generally realised, to his earlier poems. In these there is, here and there, a beauty of melody, a clear flame of imagination, such as seldom recurs in his mature work. That maturity was reached through severe and cramping discipline, in a mind which had fretted and laboured itself to exhaustion. In these too, the metrical mechanism, which afterwards became unduly rigid, is still elastic and is already masterly. In one of his boyish trial-pieces, the translation from the *Thebaid*, one comes on this :

> All birds and beasts lie hushed ; sleep steals away
> The wild desires of men and toils of day,
> And brings, descending thro' the silent air,
> A sweet forgetfulness of human care ;

a little later, in the *Temple of Fame*, a piece which as a whole is only an elaborate school-exercise, on this :

> How vain that second life in others' breath,
> The estate which wits inherit often death !
> Ease, health and life for this they must resign ;
> Unsure the tenure, but how vast the fine !

and between the two, in *Windsor Forest*, on the noble passage—too splendid to be insincere, one would say without hesitation, were it from the pen of any other poet—on the life of the happy man, "wandering thoughtful in the silent wood," the Muse and Nature his companions, with its magnificent climax :

> Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,
> Amid her kindred stars familiar room,
> Survey the region, and confers her home.

To a poet who could write thus in youth, one might think no height of Helicon was unscalable. But in Pope the *elan vital* was from the first weak and intermittent. He was crippled by wretched health : "This long disease, my life", "that wretched state of health which God has been pleased to make my portion", of which he speaks so pathetically, was no over-description.........Hence his mixture of feverish ambition and morbid

timidity, the self-consciousness which he could rarely shake off, the dissatisfaction with even his own best work that would never let him leave it alone, the fastidiousness which was not kept under control by either pride or his good sense.........To this morbid self-consciousness it is due not only that he squandered his genius on petty personal rancours, not only that neither friend nor enemy, neither man nor woman could ever safely trust him but also that his work is often most superb where it fluctuates on the edge of burlesque. *The Rape of the Lock* is by general assent one of the few perfect things in English poetry. It is, in its kind the highwater mark of poetry, and of no poetry in any kind can one say more. But further, it is worth remarking that what Johnson said of it, "New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new," is the essential definition of poetry itself, and the note of poetry at its highest. It is in effect what Shelley says in one of his most profound and illuminating sentences: "Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar." It was Pope's timidity and low vitality, not his good sense, that kept him moored to the ground. *The Essay on Man* is only the most conspicuous instance of what is characteristic of his work as a whole, that it has not the full head of pressure behind it, that it falls short in large constructive power and in continuous inspiration.

"This weakness was his, but it was likewise a weakness o his age. Pope's lifetime is almost coincident with a singular submergence of the lyrical instinct which before and after it has been the vitalising element in our poetry. It had kept it alive in the otherwise bleak and sterile century which followed Chaucer. It was the sap and life blood of the Elizabethan age, when of every corner of the wide field of poetry it might be said.

Within this mile break forth a hundred springs.

In the seventeenth century it first spread into undisciplined luxuriance and than stagnated and was lost. In Dryden , as Gray observes in one of his fine criticisms, "the music of our old versification still sounded" ; with him it disappeared. The so-called lyrical poetry of the first forty years of the eighteenth century is almost nil, but for the group of hymn-writers, among whom, in virtue of two or at most three pieces which have taken a place beyond the reach of criticism, must be in-

cluded Addison. Pope himself in his *Universal Prayer*, just touched the fringe of the group. Except for this, incursions into lyric poetry are wholly disastrous; all that can be said in extenuation is that they are but few. The only one which is ambitious, his *St. Cecilia Ode*, may fairly claim to be among the worst extant in an age conspicuous for badness. There is not a single good line in it, Thomas Warton was quite justified in saying that parts of it "have much the air of a drinking song at a country election."

We may note also that Edith Sitwell made a serious attempt to resuscitate Pope who has been lately so much neglected. And she bestows more attention on the technique of Pope's verse wherein she seemed to see his pre-eminence as a poet. She discovers rare subtlety and finesse in the structure of Pope's heroic couplet. She dismisses the charge of monotony brought against Pope's heroic couplet. This is what Edith Stwell writes. "One example of his 'monotony' is his use of the caesura. Now the caesura has, for the purposes of convenience, been held to be of uniform length and depth. But this is not so. And Pope places the caesura, the pause (of varying depths) not only to vary the *music* of his verse, but so as to heighten the meaning. As when, in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, he says:

> The dog-star rages! nay' tis part a doubt,
> All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
> Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
> They rave, recite, and madden round the land.

In this, the slightness of the pauses in the second line give the effect of a dishevelled procession streaming past one. In the fourth line, the fact that the first and second verb are alliterative, and rather long sounding, with their hard *R's* and that the third verb begins with a thick thumping *M*, gives the degree of irritation which was felt by the poet.

"But to return to the caesura. If we examine these lines from the *Dunciad*.

> One cell there is, conceal'd from vulgar eye,
> The cava of poverty and poetry.
> Keen, hollow winds how! thro' the bleak recess,
> Emblem of music caus'd by emptiness.

We shall find that the slightness of the caesura, in the third line, I have quoted—a caesura so shallow as to be hardly perceptible, gives it a strange chilliness, which is added to by

the little cold wind of the two words beginning with it in the third line, the last of these two words, because it is a one syllabled word and has a long vowel-sound being louder than the two-syllabled short-vowelled 'hollow'."

So Edith Sitwell goes on mechanically analysing Pope's heroic couplet. But does it establish Pope's greatness as a poet? Poetry is an art, but poetry is not all technique. We have to consider both matter (substance) and form (technique) in poetry. The heroic couplet is almost the exclusive medium of verse with Pope. The heroic couplet was first introduced by Chaucer. It was used by later poets, but they gave it individuality and distinction unlike Pope who, as Hazlitt puts it, "turned Pegasus into a rocking-horse." Hazlitt got it from Keats, and none could better see than Keats what poetry came to in the eighteenth century, directed and dominated as it was by Pope :

Yes, a schism
Nurtured by poppery and barbarism,
Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
Men were thought wise who could not understand
His glories ; with a puling infant's force
They sway'd about upon a rocking horse
And thought it Pegasus. Ah dismal soul'd !
The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
Of summer nights collected still to make
The morning precious ; beauty was awake !
Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead
To things ye knew not of—were closely wed
To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
And compass vile ; so that ye taught a school
Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
Their verses tallied. Essay was the task :
A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
of Poesy.

By the way, this is again verse in heroic couplet that Keats is writing—and what a difference in poetical values, compared with the so-called mechanical perfection of the couplet in the hands of Pope ! Poetry became mechanized, and its soul was killed. This was the net achievement of Pope and his followers.

We see that poetry is—we feel the thrill as beauty flashes upon the mind as we read Keats' verses quoted above. We do not feel like that when we read anything written by Pope—not even his verses, quoted and praised by Maickail. Matthew Arnold rightly says that the poetry of Dryden and Pope and all their school was conceived and composed in the soul.

Let us, however, conclude with Edith Sitwell's defence of Pope and her belief in the pre-eminence of Pope as a poet—a belief which she seeks to justify by the mechanical perfection of his heroic couplet :

"We must remember when reading certain of the biographies and certain criticism of Pope's life and of his works, that the authors were schoolmasters, not poets and that no matter how great their learning and how deep rooted their kindness, they could scarcely be expected to understand that to this man, who was one of the greatest poets England has produced, whose sense of texture in poetry was so exclusively delicate that it has never been surpassed and, I think, has scarcely been equalled, to this fine and sensitive artist, inferior poetry and clumsy texture in verse were an agony, and must have had almost the effect of physical rupture."

"Again his bodily martrydom (which inspired in Doctor Johnson one of the most moving passages in our literature) and the cruel and humiliasing sneers to which that martyrdom exposed him, made him liable to bursts of fury which would have been held within bounds by a stronger frame. There is nothing cold, about Pope's poetry ; we are buried beneath a torent of lava, but we are not walled up in ice. The reffects of his rage, and this I cannot deny, were terrible towards his enemies, and even towards some quite harmless persons whom he believed to cherish designs against him. For the lamentable fact is that he loathed bad poetry—that the cause of poetry affected him as the sound of a bugle is supposed to affect a war-horse. The bugle sounds, the war-horse charges, and the village idiot is knocked down. The fact that he was almost a more perfect artist (by which I mean a man formed for nothing but his art, living by that art, spinning it out of him self as a spider spins a thread) than any other artist of our race, did not help to make so frail a body less subject to fits of irascibility."

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

Occasion of the Poem

"The Rape of the Lock" was written as the result of a quarrel between two Roman Catholic families, friends of the Carylls. The young and impetuous Lord Petre, who was twenty-two years old, cut off a lock from the head of Miss Arabella Fermor, the famous beauty. Miss Fermor was naturally exceedingly angry. Her people were also in the same mood ; the battle grew in size, and Lord Fermor's family joined in. At last Mr. Caryll (a gentleman who was Secretary to Queen Mary, wife of James II, whose fortunes he followed into France, author of the comedy of 'Sir Solomon Single,' and of several translations in Dryden's Miscellanies) proposed that Pope should write a poem on the subject, showing the incident in the airiest light, in the hope that it would restore a sense of perspective to both the enraged families. Pope, accordingly, wrote the first draft of "The Rape of the Lock" ; it was written in less than a fornight, in 1711, in two Cantos only, and it was so printed : first, in a Miscellany of Bern Lintot's without the name of the author. But it was received so well that he made it more considerable the next year by the addition of the machinery of the Sylphs, and extended it to five Cantos. But unfortunately, far from calming the combatants, it added a fresh victim, for Pope had the very slightest acquaintance with the lady ; who instead of being enchanted at being the inspiration of one of the loveliest poems in the English language, became more angry, and more insulted, whilst Sir George Brown of Kiddington, the Sir Plume of the poems was ruffled, as if by a storm of wind, was furious at being made ridiculous, and vowed vengeance. He joined hands with the enraged Mr. Weston, the husbands of the unfortunate lady, in his campaign against pope.

"The original idea of this delightful poem—'merum sal', (i. e., pure wit) as Addison called it—was confessedly due to Pope's friend Caryll ; and the characters which carry on its action all belong to the circle of Catholic families in which Pope at the time moved. The heroine and her assailant are identified by him in his note ; Thalestris was Mrs. Morley ;

and Sir Plume, her brother Sir George Brown, who not unnaturally resented the use to which his individuality was put in the poem......As its true predecessor Warton notes the 'Rape of the Bucket' (1612) by Alessandro Tassoni, and two other similar Italian works. With Boileau's 'Lutrin' (translated into English by Rowe in (1708) "The Rape of the Lock" has in common both nature of subject and method of treatment—a trivial quarrel hu norously dignified with epical importance. But while the French poem almost rises to the level of a national satire, the English is rather, to abopt Roscoe's expression, a social, 'pleasantry."—(Sir A. W. Ward).

As for the incident, which was the occassion for the poem, we can easily imagine its repurcussions among the Roman Catholic families grouped around it, from Pope's letter to Joseph Spencer :

"The stealing of Miss Belle Fermor's hair was taken too seriously and caused an estrangement between the two families, though they had lived so long in great friendship before. A common acquaintance and well-wisher to both (*i. e.*, John Caryll, Pope's friend and patron), disired me to write a poem to make a jest of it, and laugh them together again. It was with this view that I wrote "The Rape of the Lock."

Pope has been charged with gross impoliteness in writing such a poem ; some of the critics have found in it a coarseness akin to Swift's. According to M. Taine, "Pope dedicates his poem to Mrs. Arabella Fermor with very kind of compliment. The truth is, he is not polite ; a French woman would have sent him back his book, and advised him to learn manners ; for one commendation of her beauty she would find ten sarcasms upon her frivolity...........In England it was not found too rude. Mrs. Arabella Fermor was so pleased with the poem that she gave away copies of it.........But the strongest thing is, that this trifling, for Frenchmen at least, no badinage at all. It is not at all like lightness or gaiety. Dorat Gresset, would have been stupefied and shocked by it. We remain cold under its most brilliant hits. Now and then at most a crack of the whip arouses us, but not to laughter. These caricatures seem strange to us,but do not amuse. The wit is no wit : all is calculated, combined, artificially perpared ; we expect flashes of lightning, but at the last movement they do not descend......We say to ourselves now that we are in China : that so far from Paris and Voltaire we must be surprised at no-

thing: that these folks have ears differect from ours; and that a Pekin mandarin vastly relishes kettle-music. Finally, we comprehend that even in this correct age and this artificial poetry, the old style of imagination exists; that it is nourished as before, by oddities and contrasts; and that taste, in spite of all culture, will never become acclimatised; that incongruities, far from shocking, delight it; that it is insensible to French sweetness and refinements; that it needs a succession of expressive figures, unexpected and grinning, to pass before it; that it prefers this coarse carnival to delicate insinuations; that Pope belongs to his country, in spite of his classical polish and his studied elegancies; and that his unpleasant and vigorous fancy is akin to that of Swift.

Taine's criticism of Pope's poem is quite understandable. What especially offends the delicate sense of this Frenchman is the bearishness of Pope's laughter at an elegant and beautiful woman of fashion. The Frenchman listens without sympathy, without appreciation, with the contemptuous wonder of a well-bred man at clownish buffoonery. The entire surrender of the female heart to little artifices for little ends, as Pope so vividly portrays in the picture of Belinda, does not strike Taine as ludicrous. For he is not at all accustomed to laugh at a woman.

We may note, in conclusion, that though Pope wrote the poem for a small trifling occasion, he had in his mind, when he was writing the poem, the remarkable ground of his educated contemporaries. In fact, his "The Rape of the Lock" was for these people, for Swift, Addison, Gay, and Garth and some of the members of the larger circle who, when the poem appeared in its enlarged form, bought it to the tune of 3,000 copies in four days. In spite of the huge opposition from the lords and ladies who were mocked in the poem, the poem was practically published for these contemporaries of Pope.

Light Satirs in 'The Rape of the Lock'.

"The Rape of the Lock" is a light satire on the daily life of a London beauty. We see Belinda luxuriously slumbering on tilll noon, when her lap-dog Shock awakens her. We are present at her toilet and watch the progress of "the sacred rites of pride." We see her with a gay party on its way up the Thames to Hampton Court, smiling impartially upon the "well-dressed youths" that crowd about her—the very type of liveliness, tact, and coquetry. We follow the party though the game

of cards, and the coffee, until we reach the tragic catastrophe of things which we think of as trivial or ordinary. Here is the epic of the frivolous, faithful in details to the nature of Pope's world. Pope suggests to us the vanity and shallowness of this life; and, by celebrating its inanities with the lofty dignity of the large standard of the heroic age. The lightness of Pope's satire can be more clearly appreciated if we pla ce it side by side with any of Swift's satires. Swift's satire were powerful, for he saw all the world away. His sat isrs are more bitter; he railed at the fools who contended for the world's trumpery prizes; Pope, on the other hand, tried to satirise good-humouredly the shams of his age. In fact, his 'The Rape of the Lock' was not meant to reforms manners; it was not certainly a poem for the correction of social modes of his age. It was only meant to restore good-humour between two quarrelsome families. So 'The Rape of the Lock, literally grew out of that artificial society which it depicts and satiries. This actually, is the origin of the lightness of Pope's satire in this particular poem.

Yet the poem is not only a satire on the trivial, it is effective also as a travesty on the sublime, and its wit consists largely in placing the sacred or the admirable on a seeming equality with the trifling or the absurd. We are amused be cause all ordinary standards are changed; the upheaval comes as a shock to us. We hear in the same breath of the State-counsels and the tea-drinking of a Queen, of the deaths of husbands and of lap-dogs, of the neglect of prayers, and the loss of a masquerade. In the "Gulliver's Travels" of Swift, Pope's great contemporary , we are entertained by the upsetting of our fixed ideas of physical relation; we see a man become a giant among pygmies, a pygmy among giants ; in The Rape of the Lock' we are entertained by a similar reversal of our moral and spiritual ideas, and in its tolerant cynicism the petty becomes great, the great Petty.

There is nothing more delicately playful and light in the language than Pope's description of Belinda's toilet. He here had a subject which suited him exactly, in as much as it evoked fancy without challenging imagination. We may agree with Dr. Johnson "that the 'Rape of Lock" is the most airy ; the most ingenious and the most delightful of all Pope's compositions.

"As often happens at this epoch, thc asipration after a big subject, not being sustained by a strong creative mood, stops half-way at the compromise of a mock-heroic intention ; the classical period is the golden age of parody. The attitude of the writer tends to make him critical, and of a modern truce of mind, while on the other hand, his doctrinal principles form upon him the imitation of ancient models, the gravity of an aesthetic cult ; this forces respect, this obsession of the past, imply a constraint, and the spirit of the time finds a subterfuge in imitating antiquity in a vein of mockery. The abundance of the mock- heroic type of litrature betrays an instinctive effort in the world of letters to reconcile a little independence with a dogmatic orthodoxy, and to introduce an element of novelty in to an imitative art.

"This is not to say that 'The Rape of the Lock' is a parody in quite the same way as so many other contemporary works ; the subject, however unimportant it may be, has an interest in itself ; and the contrast of its delicacy with its serious tone and the traditional trappings in which it is set, brings out its somewhat quaint grace. Nevertheless, it is permissible to think that all this is very artificial. The ingenuity, the wit, an after striking verbal felicity ; an occasional note of true imaginative poetry, in the pretty fancy of thy sylphs ; the skilful handling of the conclusion, so discreetly hinted ; shafts of satire which, though light, yet penetrate cannot make us forget that the laboured application of this art is here excessive ; or effets prolix passages, traces of vulgarity, the musky atmosphere of a fashionable elegance, to the prestige, of which the poet bows even when he claims to dominate it. The form reveals a greater proportion of periphrases and indirect expressions." —(Louis Cazamian).

Merits of the Poem

In its blending of mock-heroic satire and delicate fancy, "The Rape of the Lock"...this exquisite specimen of filigree work, as Hazlitt calls it ...remains unmatched.

We can get an idea of Pope's use of words in harmony with the sence, from a study of 'The Rape of the Lock." Let us take the following lines:

"Some to the Sun their Insect-Wings unfold,
Waft on the Breeze, or sink in Clouds of Gold.
Transparent Forms ; too fine for mortal Sight,

in any other of Pope's works; and it is brought in, of course, by the sylphs, who were introduced in the revision at the suggestion of Addison. So marvellous is Pope's style that the pomatum box and 'alum styptics' lose their grossness and the scissors that cut the lock seem to be of fairy metal. We can only shudder at the thought of imagining what Swift would have made of them.

Even if "The Rape of the Lock" might appear rather monotonous to some of us, we cannot help feeling the captivating quality of the delicate trifling of the poem which is almost irresistible; its abundance of modish detail, its grace and lightness, its wit and brilliance and polish, were all qualities dear to the hearts of the fine ladies and gentlemen who had the good fortune to read the manuscript. We can only imagine the effect of the publication. The poem became the rage. Pope was tremendously elated at his success. He thought, however, that he could see a way in which his work might be improved, and so he introduced into it a whole army of elves and spirits by whom the course of events was supposed to be directed. In this new form it was published anonymously in "Lintot's Miscellany" though all the town knew who was the author. In the first week three thousand copies were sold.

As we have already noted, "The Rape of the Lock' was written in imitation of Boileau's "Lutrin"; but it far surpassed its model, and remains the greatest of mock heroic poems. It was the first poem to impress upon the French the fact that they had not the entire monopoly of exquisitely finished and dainty workmanship. It is, therefore, curious to find the French critic Taine doing all injustice to this poem. Hardly any poet at any time could amalgamate his second and his first thoughts so happily as Pope. Indeed there is no work of Pope's that belongs more truly to his age than this one. The exquisite raillery with which the poem perpetually sparkles, the famailiarity which it exhibits with the epics of antiquity, and the use to which that familiarity is turned, the finished ease of its style, all at once connect it with the age which produced it. Addison called it "merum sal" that is pure wit, in its earlier form. Certainly the additions made, if they do in some degree impair its unity, must not be allowed to deprive it of that happy title.

We have seen how Pope has been charged with gross impoliteness in writing such a poem; indeed, M. Taine found

Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in Light.
Loose to the Wind their airy Garments flew,
This glitt'ring Textures of the filmy Dew ;
Dipt in the richest Tincture of the Skies,
Where Light disports in ever-mingling Dies,
While every Beam new transient Colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their Wings."
(Canto II, lines 59-68).

These lines differ is no wise from the wings of the sylphs, as they float above the barge. These remarkable lines are the only fitting description of the poem itself ; it is impossible to describe it in other terms.

Let us again compare those lines quoted above, with the description of the card party, in the Third Canto, with the velvety softness, and depth and shade—like the shadow cast by a great tree on some hot afternoon :—

"And parti-coloured troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
The skilful nymph reviews her force with care :
Let spades be trumps : She said, and trumps they were
Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable lord !
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board."

"The whole of 'The Rape of the Lock,' excepting that part which deals with the Cave of Spleen, seems wet and shining with dew. Sometimes these 'thin glittering tentures of the filmy dew', are 'dipt in the richest tincture of the skies' as in the description of the Sylphs......sometimes the dew is shining like the pale flowers of the early light which are bunched outside Belinda's window......Sometimes the dews are glittering night dews............The whole of 'The Rape of the Lock' is fresh as the summer air blowing down the dew that tastes of the green leaves on which it has been lying, and this comes largely from the absence of female rhymes." (Edith Sitwell).

Perhaps the poem is not everywhere so charming as it looks. A certain contempt for Belinda and her sex peers out from behind the compliments ; Pope writes as though the lady will never have the wit to feel his scratches. Nor is the Cave of Spleen the happiest of fancies. But otherwise all his 'airy substance' and gay mischief. There is more Pure poetry than

in it a coarseness akin to Swift's. But "The Rape of the Lock" being intended as a piece of raillery, can only be condemend if in it raillery passes the bounds of what is pleasing ; and thought doubtless much might have been put into the poem which is not there, yet what there is in it, is both light and charming ; and if a moral be conveyed, it is implied with well-bred ease and good humour and not surely obtruded upon the reader.

"The Rape of the Lock" is, in the words of Edith Sitwell, "that miracle of the summer air, airy and glittering as the nets of the summer light and early dew over the stawberry beds— a poem so airy that it might have been woven by the long fingers of the Sylphs in their dark and glittering Indian gauzes, floating like a little wind among the jewelled dark dews on the leaves of the fruit-trees."

We may sum up, in conclusion, by noting that nothing could be lighter and daintier than "The Rape of the Lock." The setting is preposterously and delightfully monumental. An archaeologist might draw up from the poem a treatise on the toilette service of a lady of fashion in the golden days, when, near the scene of the epic

"Great Anne, whom three realms obey.
Did sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea."

—*Canto III.*

If no record survived of the game of cards, it could be reconstructed from the picture drawn here by Pope. The description of the race of Sylphs, the tutelary guardians of sovereign beauty, is a sample. There would seem even to be the danger of suffocation of the plot by its sumptuous properties. Yet the nicest proportion is maintained between accessaries and principals. Belinda, the object of universal care by the powers of air and of drawing rooms, down to the obsequious "Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain," reigns in the tale supreme.

Personal Element in the Poem

As we have seen while describing the age of Pope the authors of this period very consciously avoided any expression of their personal feeling in their writings. Thus if we look for any subjective mood in their works, we must be disappointed, Actually an important feature of the Augustan writers was this determined negligence of the personal element. Herin lies the difference between Pope and Wordsworth or any other poet of the Romantic school.

We shall have to look at Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" bearing in our minds this typical feature of the Augustan authors. In spite of the careful attempt on the part of the poet to avoid writing anything personal, some personal topics have however crept into the poem. Though these are apparently negligible, we can still discuss them just for the pleasure of finding Romantic sentiments in Pope's writings. Let us take for instance the following lines from Canto IV :

"A constant Vapour o'er the Palace flies ;
Strange Phantoms rising as the Mists arise ;
Dreadful, as Hermit's Dreams in haunted Shades,
Or bright as Visions of expiring Maids."

Do we not find an unmistakable parallel to these lines in a letter written by Pope to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, where he says, "I am foolish again ; and methinks I am imitating, in my ravings, the dreams of splenetic enthusiasts and solitaires, who fall in love with saints, and fancy themselves in the favour of angels and spirits, whom they can never see or touch."

We also find in another letter of Pope written to Caryll, where he says, "More men's reputations I believe are whispered away, than any other ways destroyed." We find the same idea repeated in another line in the Fourth Canto of 'The Rape of the Lock' :

"Me thinks already I your I Tears survey,
Already here the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded Toast,
And all your honour in a Whisper lost !"

Besides these stray lines, there is practically little of personal allusions in this poem, though we find many allusions to contemporary life. These allusions are more or less personal too since Pope himself took active interest in social affairs. Thus we find numerous mentionings of a game of cards, of taking snuff, or of drinking coffee. Pope never failed to enjoy these.

Allusions to contemporary incidents are very interesting. Thus we find the mentioning of the fatal disease of small pox, in Canto V :

"Behold the first in Virtue, as in Face !
Oh ! if to dance all Night, and Dress all Day,
Charm'd the Small-pox, or chas'd old Age away ;"

We may easily gauge the terrors of the small-pox in those days from the records of the Patre family; the Hon. John Petre died in 1762, and the 'Gent. Magazine' noted him as 'the 18th person of that family that has died of the small pox in 27 years'. The Lord Petre of "The Rape of the Lock" had died of it in 1713, so that the line quoted above would have a special point.

A very interesting allusion to contemporary life can be found in Canto IV, where Pope describes the usual hallucinatory symptoms of the spleen. Pope describes to us here a satiric catalogue of the scenic effects of contemporary opera and pantomime :

> "Now glaring Fiends, and Snakes on rolling Spires,
> Pale Spectres, gaping Tombs, and Purple Fires :
> Now Lakes of liquid Gold, Elysian Scenes.
> And Crystal Domes, And Angels in Machines."

A more or less parallel description occurs in "Dunciad", Book III, line 231 :

> "All sudden, Gorgons hiss, and Dragons glare
> And ten-horn'd fiends and Giants rush to war.
> Hell rises, Heav'n descends, and dance on Earth."

But by satirizing the scenic extravagancy of the contemporary opera, in "The Rape of the Lock," Pope presumably also intends a particular gibe at Addison whose opera, "Rosamond" III, i., has 'a grotto, Henry asleep, a cloud descends, in it two angels.'

The Mock-heroic Style

"The Rape of the Lock" is correctly termed by its author a heroi-comical poem, and belongs distinctly to that class of composition which we call burlesque. In other words, it applies a peculiar kind of treatment to a subject palpably and therefore ludicrously undeserving of it. It differs from poems which are mere parodies on other poems, in as much as it burlesques or mocks an entire class of poetry; and herein lies its superiority to a more travesty, such as the 'Batrachomyomachia.' According to Warton, the true Predecessors of "The Rape of the Lock' are the "Rape of the Bucket" (1612) by Alessandro Tassoni, and two other similar works. With Beileau's "Lutrin" the English poem has in common both nature of subject and method of treatment—a trivial humorously dignified with epical importance. But while the French poem almost rises to

the level of a national satire, Pope's poem is rather, to adopt Roscoe's expression, a social 'pleasantry.'

The mock-heroic or heroi-comical poem is that particular sort of poem, for which the elevated Queen Anne style is peculiarly suited—in which its affection and insincerity are not felt as faults, because affection and insincerity are part of the humour in which the poet writes. Pope's poetic diction is seen in one of its happiest application in "The Rape of the Lock", where trivials incidents, and little anxieties and interests, and petty frivolities are purposely treated as matters of vast moment.

"...when we read those lines (in 'The Rape of the Lock'), we are haunted by the memory of other opening lines built up in much the same way. And we are soon turning up our 'Paradise Lost' and reading :

> 'Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe......
> Sing heav'nly Muse............
> And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost perfer
> Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
> Instruct me for thou know'st.........'

So "The Rape of the Lock" is a mocking poem. That is, its literary affiliations are of a complicated kind. We might, for instance, say that "Lycidas", a pastoral elegy, falls into a simple literary context : it joins friends like-minded to itself. But "The Rape of the Lock" is a trespasser. It joins the tribe of the epics as Puck joins the human beings in "A Midsummer Night,s Dream." 'I sing,' Pope exclaims,arranging the heavy singing robes of Milton about him—but his attitudes are queered by what he announces he is going to sing ; and it is not Homer's wrath of Achilles, or Virgil's arms and the man, or Milton's justifying of God's ways to man : it is merely the cutting off of a girl's hair. The poem is, therefore, a civilized one, for mockery (even in the simplest of its forms, one child mocking another) is civilized, implying a criticism. And here mockery is far from being in its simplest form. Some indication of how far the poem is civilized is afforded by a comparison between its opening and the opening of Sidney, Wordsworth and Gray...........

"It seems that mockery of the epic manner is as old as the

epic manner itself, and when Pope undertook it he was completing a process which in extent writings began with the Homeric 'Battle of the Frogs and Mice.' Burlesque and mock heroic had become especially popular in the seventeenth century—'Don Quixote' itself had appeared in 1605-15, and; so far as Pope's particular poem is concerned, there had been Boileau's 'Lutrin'.........and Garth's 'Dispensary's......Garth had laid down the principles for effective mock—heroic, leaving to Pope the chance to produce something better by pushing the same principles to their logical conclusions of completeness proportion, delicacy, homogeneity.

'The Rape of the Lock' is the masterpiece of the mock-heroic because in its 1714 form it mocks at the maximum amount of the epic. The mockery takes different forms employs different devices. Apart from the general mockery of the epic form and substance the epic manner with its invocations, its similes, its 'He said 's' and the epic matter with its machinery, its battles, its journeys on water, and down to the under-world, its harangues...apart from all this, there is particular mockery of a scene or a detail or a certain speech or a comment in the person of the poet. And the scale of the mimicry is always varying. We find Belinda flashing light ning from her eyes...........but against the bulk of Hector, she is a mere slip of a girl, a mere fashionable lady like any figuring in the unheroic pages of the 'Spectator.' We find an alter at which ardent prayers are fatefully half granted and a goddess who is worshipped ; but the alter is built of French romances and the goddess is the image of the vain Belinda in the mirror of her dressing table. We find a battle drawn forth to combat like the Greeks, on a velvet plain ; but it is only a game of cards on a fashionable card table. We find a supernatural being threatening his inferiors with torture ; but it is a sylph, not Jove, and the tortures are neither thunderbolts nor pains of Hades; but crulties devised ingeniously from the requisities of the toilet table. The seale of the imitation is always shifting. But on the whole it is one of the diminution. The epic is a long poem ; 'The Rape of the Lock' is short. The story of the epic covers years ; that of 'The Rape of the Lock' hours. The gods of the epic are stupendous creatures ; Pope'i sylphs tiny." (Geoffrey Tillotson).

Thus we find that Pope's method of using his materials in 'The Rape of the Lock' was absolutely mock-heroic. He

deliberately made use of the heroic and epic form. Pope presents the sacred and the admirable on a seeming equality with the trifling or the absurd. The ludicrous in the form of a lofty and declamatory style gives us a sort of shock—but it finally proves to be a merry shock...a shock that provokes our laughter. We are amused since all ordinary standards are changed.

The spirit of the Augustan age found its most complete embodiment in burlesque poetry. It was then in perfect accordance with that spirit that Pope developed and expanded his "jeud"esprit' into its fuller form. It was thought that supernatural agents were essential to an epic poem. Pope was particularly happy in his selection of such beings. He made use, with certain modifications, of the spiritual system of the Rosicrucians, a sect well-known throughout Western Europe in the seventeenth century. This, too, he used with the characteristic light mockery of his age.

Characters in the Poem

The chief character of the poem, as is obvious, is Belinda We see Belinda luxuriously slumbering on till noon, when her lap-dog Shock awakens her. We are present at her toilet, and watch the progress of "the sacred rites of pride." We see her with a gay party on its way up the Thames to Hampton Court. Smiling impartially upon the "well dressed youths" that crowd about her, the very type of liveliness, tact, and coquetry. Now, the name, 'Belinda' was a fashionable name of the time, being that of a gentle woman in Etherege's 'Man of Mode,' and of an 'affected lad' in Cougreve's 'Old Bachelor'. It was specially appropriate for one who was known to her friends as Belle Fermor. Belinda, i. e., Arabella Fermor in actual life was the daughter of Henry Fermor of Tusmore and Somerton, Oxon, and of Ellen, second daughter and co-heir of Sir George Brown of Wickhambreux, Kent. The date of her birth is unknown, but probably fell between 1690. Late in 1714 or early in 1715 she married Francis Perkins of Ufton Court, Barks. There were six children of the marriage. She died in 1758, two years after her husband's death.

We come across another interesting character in the fourth Canto—Sir Plume. Sir Plume was originally Sir George Brown. This gentleman happened to be the cousin of Arabella's mother. His part in this story has been mentioned in the Introduction —Occasion of the Poem. This is how Pope makes Sir Plume speak:

"My Lord, why what the Devil ?
"Z-ds ! damn the Lock ! 'force God, you must be civil !
"Plague on 't ! 'tis past a Jest—nay prithee, Pox !
"Give her the Hair"—

His words remind of the language of the 'common Swearer' in Tatler, No. 13.

Again a new character Clarissa is introduced in Canto V. Critics suppose that she is introduced to open clearly moral of the poem, in parody of a speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus in Honour. At least this was the intention of Pope when he brought in Clarissa.

But the most interesting characters in Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" are the sylphs. It was thought in Pope's days that supernatural agents were essential to an epic poem. Pope was particularly happy in his selection of such beings. He made use, with certain modifications of the spiritual system of the Rosicrucians, a sect well-known throughout Western Europe in the seventeenth century. Pope's original "Rape of the Lock" actually consisted of two Cantos. But he enlarged this to five Cantos by adding the events of the sylphs.

"Pope's sylphs are of course, more vividly realized than those of de Villars, and, in the same way that he rifles other systems to enrich the Rosierucian mythology, he rifles earlier English poets to enrich the sylphs themselves. He takes hints and words from the Ariel of Shakespeare (perhaps as he appears in Dryden's version of the 'Tempest,'), the fairies and angels of Milton, and the fairies and demons of Dryden. Pope associates the sylphs and sylphids with their short vowel 'i'. There are the names Brillante and Crispissa and the short 'i' narrows the lip movements of the several lines ; for instance :

"Thin glitt'ring Textures of the filmy Dew ;
Dipt in the richest Tincture of the skies......
Or dip their Pinions in the pointed Bow......
Some thrid the mazy Ringlets of her Hair......

The vowel springs most plentifully when Ariel threatens torments :

"...........transfixt with Pins.........
.... Stypticks.................
Shrink his thin Essence like a rivell'd Flower.

Or as 'Ixion' fix'd, the Wretch shall feel,
The giddy Motion of the whirling Mill."

"Pope's originality most obviously shows itself in the way he particularizes the notions he was borrowed *e. g.*, the account of the sylphs' guardianship of maidens (1, 71.), and in the feminine satire which salts much of what he says of them and much of what he makes them say. In other poets fairies are country creatures." (Geoffrey Tillotson).

As to the origin of the sylphs in the poem, Pope owed them to 'Le Conte de Gabalis,' a 'roman' written forty years earlier in France by the Abbe de Montfaucon de Villars. According to the principles laid down in this book, the 'Elements' are inhabited by many different creatures besides those which we see. The Air, for example, "is full of an innumerable Multitude of people, having Human Shape, somewhat Fierce in appearance but Tractable upon experience.........The Earth is filled almost to the Centre with Gnomes or Pharyes ; a people of small Stature........." So we find how Pope was indebted to such passages for his characterization of sylphs in "The Rape of the Lock."

But Pope also departs in some respect from de Villars. Thus in 'Gabalis' all the sprites are noble, but Pope following the traditional categories of spirits, makes the gnomes bad, wickedly contriving such vexations as are exemplified at Canto IV, 67.

Opinions of Critics

With the heroic we may class its travestie, the mock-heroic. And here the inimitable poem of the *Rape of The Lock* will occur to everyone, in which Pope, with admirable skill and perfect mastery over all the resources of art has created an artistic whole, faultless, no less in proportion and keeping than in the finish of the parts, which, in its kind, remains unapproached by anything in English, and probably in European literature. The slight incident on which the poem was founded is well-known. Among the triflers who fluttered round the sovereign at Hampton Court :

Where thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take and sometimes tea.

Were Belinda (Miss Arabella Fermor), and the Baron (Lord Petre). Small talk, badinage, flirtation, scandal,—

At every word a reputation dies—

are insufficient to fill the vacant hours, and for these 'idle hands' some mischief is soon found to do. The Baron, borrowing a pair of scissors from one of the maids of honour, Clarissa, audaciously cuts off one of the two curling locks of Belinda's hair :

Just then Clarissa drew, with tempting grace,
A two-edged weapon from her shining case ;
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with reverence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends ;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bent her head.
Swift to the lock a thousand spirites repair,
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair !
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear.
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the poet drew near,
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought,
As, on the nosegay in her breast reclind,
He watch'd the ideas rising in her mind ;
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking in her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his power expired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired
The peer now spreads the glittering forfex wide,
To enclose the lock ; now joins it to divide
E'en then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched sylph to fondly interposed,
Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain ,
(But airy substance soon unites again)
The meeting points the sacred hair disever
From the fair head, for ever and for ever.

The liberty was resented by the lady, and a breach between the two families was the result, in the hope of healing which Pope wrote the poem. So far the real nearly coincided with the fictitious facts. But Pope unwilling to leave the matter in an unsettled and indeterminate state—an error which Dryden did not avoid in the *Absalom and Achitophel*—contrived, with the happiest art, to crown the incident with a poetically just and satisfying conclusion. The insulted and enraged Belinda commands her beau, Sir Plume,—

> Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
> And the nice conduct of clouded cane,

to exort the lock from the Baron. He makes the attempt, but in vain ; the two parties now muster their forces, and engage in deadly strife, these to keep, those to win back, the lock. Belinda, through the dexterous application of a pinch of snuff, has the baron at her mercy, and the lock is to be restored. But, lo ! it has vanished, and is hunted for everywhere in vain. Many theories are framed to account for its disappearance, but the poet was privileged to see it wafted upwards to the skies, where transformed into a comet, sweeping by with 'a radiant trail of hair', the lover takes it for Venus 'and the astrologer for some baleful luminary, foreshowing :

> The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.

Lightness, grace, airy wit, playful rallying, everything, in short, that is most aline to the ordinary characteristics of the English intellect, are found in this poem. It is a keen, sunny satire, without a spark of ill-nature, on the luxury and vanity of a society impregnated with ideas borrowed from the court of the Grand Monarque, from classical revivals, and Renaissance modes of thought. It may be noted that the continual association of contrasted ideas is one of the chief sources of the wit with which the poem flashes and runs over, as with lambent flames of summer lightning. Belinda's guardian sylph cannot discover the nature of the danger which threatens her,

> Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
> Or some frail china jar recieve a flow ;
> Or stain her honour, her new brocade ;
> Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade.

So again,—

> The merchant from the Exchange returns in peace,
> And the long labours of the toilet cease.

And

> Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast
> When husbands, or when lap dogs,breathe their last.

The trivial is raised th the rank of the important, and,as it were, confounded with it, that both may appear as so much plastic material in the hand of the master. This is the very triumph of art.

Thomas Arnold

His Muse was on a peace establishment, and grew somewhat effeminate by long ease and indulgence. He lived in the smiles of fortune, and basked in the favour of the great. In his smooth and polished verse we meet with no prodigies of nature, but with miracles of wit; thunders of his pen are whispered flatteries; its forked lightnings pointed sarcasms; for 'the gnarled oak', he gives us 'the soft myrtle'; for rocks, and seas, and mountains, artificial grass-plots, gravel-walks, and tinkling rills; for earthquakes and tempests, the breaking of a flower-pot, or the fall of a china jar; for the tug and war of the elements, or the deadly strife of the passsions, we have

'Calm contemplation and poetic ease.'

Yet within this retired and narrow circle how much, and that how exquisite, was contained. What discrimination, what wit, what delicacy, what fancy, what lurking spleen, what elegance of thought, what pampered refinement of sentiment! It is like looking at the world through a microscope, where everything assumes a new character and a new consequence, where things are seen in their minutest circumstances and slightest shades of difference; where the little becomes gigantic, the deformed beautiful, and the beautiful deformed. The wrong end of the magnifier is, to be sure, held to everything, but still the exhibition is highly curious, and we know not whether to be most pleased or surprised. Such, at least, is the best account I am able to give of this extra-ordinary man, without doing injustice to him or others. It is time to refer to particular instances in his works—*The Rape of the Lock* is the best or most ingenious of these. It is the most exquisite specimen of *fillagree* (filigree) work ever invented. It is admirable in proportion as it is made of nothing.

'More subtle web Arachne cannot spin,
Nor the fine nets, which oft we woven see
Of scorched dew, do not in th' air more lightly flee'.

It is made of gauze and silver spangles. The most glittering appearance is given to every thing, to paste, pomatum, billet-doux, and patches. Aairs, languid airs, breathe around; —the atmosphere is perfumed with affection. A toilette is described with the solemnity of an altar raised to the Goddess of vanity, and the history of a silver bodkin is given with all

the pomp of heraldry. No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, no splendour of poetic diction to set off the meanest things. The balance between the concealed irony and the assumed gravity, is as nicely trimmed as the balance of power in Europe. The little is made great, and the great is made little. You hardly know whether to laugh or weep. It is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly. It is the perfection of the mock-heroic ! I will give only the two following passages in illustration of these remarks. Can anything be more elegant and graceful than the description of Belinda, in the beginning of the second Canto ?

'Not with more glories, in the ethereal plain,
The first sun rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rivals of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-drest youths around her shone,
But ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels abore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those :
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide ;
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two locks which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.'

The following is the introduction to the account of Belinda's assult upon the baron bold, who had dissevered one of these locks 'from her fair head for ever and for ever.'

'Now meet they fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same his ancient personage to deck,
Her great, great grandsire wore about his neck,
In three scal-rings ; which after, melted down,
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown ;

Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin grac'd her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears)'.

I do not know how far Pope was indebted for the original idea, or the delightful execution of this poem, the *Lutrin* of Boileau. *William Hazlitt.*

The Rape of the Lock, this miraculous poem, which has been most foolishly described as a work in silver filigree, is light, variable and enchanting as a little summer wind blowing down the golden spangles of the dew from the great faunal trees—the whole poem might have been woven by the air-thin golden fingers of Pope's sylphs. This thin and glittering texture, how did it ever come into being? The lines differ in no wise from the wings of the sylphs, they float above the barge:

Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms, to fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light.
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew
Thin glitt'ring texture of the filmy dew,
Dipped in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While ev'ry beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.

Those lines are the only fitting description of the poem itself; it is impossible to describe it in other terms. And yet Pope has been held to be deficient in beauty!

The only touch of shadow in those lines in the word 'waft' but I imagine that not in any other poem in the English language could such complete and dazzling control of texture be found, with the light and lovely liquids of the earlier lines and the richer colour of the last two couplets. Compare the lines quoted above, with the description of the card-party; in the third Canto, with the velvety softness, and depth and shade—like the shadow cast by a great tree on some hot afternoon.

And parti-coloured troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain,

The skilful nymph reviews her force with care :
Let spades be trumps ! she said, and trumps they were.
Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first unconquerable lord !
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.

Compare this with the early morning whiteness of the First Canto and see how far the charge of monotony can be brought against Pope.

Edith Sitwell.

Its faults, a certain hardness and want of sympathy, are the faults of the age, and work little more than a submission to the prevalent Congreve ideal of polite manners. Its merits are of the most delicate order. *Edmund Gosse.*

THE
RAPE of the LOCK
AN
HEROI-COMICAL POEM

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos ;
Sed juvat hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.

—*Martial*

(I had not wished, Belinda to dishonour your hair. But it delights me to have yielded to this your request.)

To

Mrs. ARABELLA FERMOR

MADAM,

It will be in vain to deny that I have some Regard for this piece, since I Dedicate it to You. Yet You may bear me Witness, it was intended only to divert a few young Ladies, who have good Sense and good Humour enough, to laugh not only at their Sex's little unguarded Follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the Air of a Secret, it soon found its Way into the World. An imperfect Copy having been offer'd to a Bookseller, You had the Good-Nature for my Sake to consent to the Publication of one more correct : This I was forc'd to before I had executed half my Design, for the *Machinery* was entirely wanting to complete it.

The *Machinery*, Madam, is a Term invented by the Critics, to signify that Part which the Deities, Angels, or Daemons, are made to act in a Poem : For the ancient Poets are in one respect like many modern Ladies ; Let an Action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost Importance. These Machines I determin'd to raise on a very new and odd Foundation, the *Rosicrucian* Doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard Words before a Lady ; but 'tis so much the Concern of a Poet to have his Works understood, and particularly by your Sex, that You must give me leave to explain two or three difficult Terms.

The *Rosicrucians* are a People I must bring You acquainted with. The best Account I know of them is in a French Book call'd *Lo Comte de Gabalis*, which both in its Title and Size is so like a *Novel*, that many of the Fair Sex have read it for one by Mistake. According to these Gentlemen, the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call *Sylphs*, *Gnomes*, *Nymphs*, and *Salamauders*. The *Gnomes* or Daemons of Earth, delight in Mischief; but the *Sylphs*, whose Habitation is in the Air, are the best-condition'd Creatures imaginable. For they say, any Mortals may enjoy the most intimate Familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a Condition very easy to all true *Adepts*, in inviolate Preservation of Chastity.

As to the following Canto's all the Passages of them are as Fabulous, the Vision at the Beginning, or the Transformation at the End; (except the Loss of your Hair, which I always mention with Reverence). The human Persons areas Fictitious as the Airy ones; and the Character of *Belinda*, as it is now manag'd, resembles You in nothing but in Beauty.

If this Poem had as many Graces as there are in Your Person, or in Your Mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the World half so Uncensured as You have done. But let its Fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this Occasion of assuring You that I am, with the truest Esteem.

Madam,

Your Most Obedient Humble Servant,

A. Pope

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

CANTO I

What dire offence from am,rous Causes springs,
What mighty Contests rise from trivial Things,
I sing,—This Verse to *Caryll*, Muse ! is due ;
This ev'n *Bellinda* may vouchsafe to vew :
Slight is the subject, but not so the Praise
If She inspire, and He approve my Lays.

Say what strange Motive Goddess ! cou'd compel
A well-bred *Lord* t' assault a gentle *Belle* ?
Oh, say what stranger Cause, yet unexplor'd,
Cou'd make a gentle *Belle* reject a *Lord* ?
In Tasks so bold can Little Men engage,
And in soft Bosoms dwells such mighty Rage ?

Sol thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous Ray.
And op'd those Eyes that must eclipse the Day ;
Now Lap dogs give themselves the rowzing Shake,
And sleepless Lovers, just at Twelve, awake :
Thrice rung the Bell, the Slipper knock'd the Ground,
And the press'd Watch return'd a silver Sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her Guardian *Sylph* prolong'd the balmy Rest.
'Twas he had summon'd to her silent Bed
The morning-Dream that hover'd o'er her Head :
A Youth more glitt'ring to an a *Birth-night Beau*,
(That ev'n in Slumber caus'd her Cheek to glow)
Seem'd to her Ear his winning Lips to lay,
And thus in Whispers said, or seem'd to say,

Fairest of Mortals thou distinguish'd Care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of Air !
If e'er one Vision touch'd thy infant Thought,
Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught :
Of airy Elves by Moonlight Shadows seen,
The silver Token, and the circled Green,
Or virgins visited by Angel Pow'rs.
With Golden Crowns and Wreath of heav'nly Flow'rs ;
Hear and believe ! thy own Importance know,

Nor bound thy narrow Views to Things below.
Some secret Truths from Learned pride conceal'd,
To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd :
What tho' no Credit doubting Wits may give ?
The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.
Know then unnumber'd spirits round thee fly,
The light *Militia* of the lower Sky :
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the Wing,
Hang o'er the Box and hover round the *Ring*.
Think what an equipage thou hast in Air,
And view with scorn *Two Pages* and a *Chair*.
As now your own, our Beings were of old,
And once inclos'd in Woman's beauteous Mold ;
Thence, by a soft Transition, we repair
From earthly Vehicles to these of Air
Think not, when Woman's transient Breath is fled,
That all her Vanities at once are dead ;
Succeeding Vanities she still regards,
And tho' she plays no more ; o' erlooks the cards.
Her Joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And Love of *Omber* Death survive.
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
To their first Elements their Souls retire
The Sprights of fiery Termagants in Flame
Mount up, and take a *Salamander's* Name.
Soft yielding Minds to Water glide away,
And sip, with *Nymphs* their Elemental Tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a *Gnome*,
In search of Mischief still on Earth to roam.
The light Coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the Fields of Air.

Know further yet ; Whoever fair and chaste
Rejects Mankind, is by some *Sylphs* embrac'd :
For spirits, freed from moral Laws, with ease
Assume what Sexes and what Shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting Maids,
In Courtly Balls, and Midnight Masquerades ,
Safe from the treach' rous Friend, the daring Spark,
The Glance by Day, the Whisper in the Dark,
When kind Occasion prompts their warm Desires,
When Musick softene, and when Dancing fires,
'Tis but their *Sylph*, the wise celestials know,
Tho' *Honour* is the Word with Men below.

Some Nymphs there are, too conscious of their Face,
For Life predestin'd to the *Gnomes'* Embrace
These swell their Prospects and exalt their Pride,
When Offers are disdain'd Love deny'd :
Then gay Ideas crowd the vacant Brain,
While peers and Dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And Gariers, Stars, and Coronets appear,
And in soft sounds *Your Grace* salutes their Ear.
'Tis these that early taint the Female Soul,
Instruct the Eyes of young *Coquettes* to roll,
Teach Infant Cheeks a bidden Blush to know,
And little Hearts to flutter at a *Beau.*

Oft, when the world imagine Women stray,
The *Sylphs* thro' mystick Mazes guide their way,
Thro' all the giddy Circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.
What tender Maid but must a Victim fall
To one Man's Treat, but for another's Ball ?
When *Florio* speaks, what Virgin could withstand,
If gentle *Damon* did not squeeze her Hand ?
With varying Vanities, from ev'ry Part,
They shift the moving Toyshop of their Heart ;
Where Wigs with Wigs, with Sword-knots Sword-knots strive,
Beaus banish Beaus, and Coaches Coaches drive,
This erring Mortals Levity may call :
Oh, blind to Truth ! the *Syplhs* contrive it all.

Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful Sprite, And *Ariel* is my Name.
Late, as I rang'd the Crystal Wilds of Air,
In the clear Mirror of thy ruling *Star*
I saw, alas ! some dread Event impend,
Ere to the Main this Morning Sun descend.
But Heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where :
Warn'd by the *Sylph*, Oh Pious Maid, beware !
This to disclose is all thy Guardian can.
Beware of all, but most beware of Man !"

He said ; when *Shock*, who thought she slept too long ;
Leapt up, wak'd his Mistress with his Tongue.
'Twas then, *Belinda* ! if Report say true
Thy Eyes first open'd on a *Billet-doux* :
Wounds, *Charms* and *Ardors* were no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy Head.

And now, unveil'd, the *Toilet* stands displayd,
Each Silver Vase in mystic Order laid.
First, rob'd in white, the Nymph intent adores,
With Head uncover'd *Cosmetic* Powr's.
A heav'nly Image in the Glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her Eyes she rears ;
Th' inferior Priestess, at her Altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred Rite of pride,
Unnumber'd Treasures ope at once, and here
The various off' rings of the World appear ;
From each she nicely culls with curious Toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt' ring Spoil,
This Casket *India*'s glowing Gems unlocks,
And all *Arabia* breathes from yonder Box :
The Tortoise, hare and Elephant unite,
Transform'd to *Combs*, the speckled and the white.
Here Files of Pins extend their shining Rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.
Now awful Beauty puts on all its Arms ;
The Fair each moment rises in her Charms,
Repairs her Smiles, awakens ev'ry Grace,
And calls forth all the Wonders of her Face ;
Sees by Degrees a purer Blush arise,
And keener Lightnings quicken in her Eyes.
The busy *Sylphs* surround their darling Care ;
These set the Head, and those divide the Hair,
Some fold the Sleeve, whilst others plait the Gown ;
And *Betty's* prais'd for Labours not her own.

CANTO II

Not with more Glories, in th' Etherial Plain,
The Sun first rises o'er the purpled Main,
Than, issuing forth, the Rival of his Beams
Launch'd on the Bosom of the Silver *Thames*.
Fair Nymphs and well-drest Youths around her shone,
But ev'ry Eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white Breast a sparkling *Cross* she wore.
Which *Jews* might kiss and Infidels adore,
Her lively Looks a sprightly Mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those :
Favours to none, to all she Smiles extends ;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the Sun, her Eyes the Gazers strike,

And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful Ease, and Sweetness void of Pride,
Might hide her Faults, if *Belles* and Faults to hide :
If to her share some Female Errors fall,
Look on her Face, and you'll forget th'm all.
This Nymph, to the Destruction of Mankind,
Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal Curls, and well conspir'd to deck,
With shining Ringlets, her smooth Iv'ry Neck.
Love in these Labyrinths his Slaves detains,
And mighty Hearts are held in slender Chains.
With hairy Springes we the Birds betray,
Slight Lines of Hair surprize the Finny Prey,
Fair Tresses Man's imperial Race insnare,
And Beauty draws us with a single Hair.
Th' advent'rous *Baron* the bright Locks admir'd ;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the Prize aspir'd.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By Force to ravish, or by Fraud betray ;
For when Success a Lover's Toil attends,
Few ask, if Fraud of Force attain'd his ends.
For this, ere *Phoebus* rose, he had implor'd
Propitious Heav'n, and ev'ry Power ador'd,
But Chiefly *Love*—to *Love* an Altar built,
Of twelve vast *French* Romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three Garters, half a Pair of Gloves,
And all the Trophies of his former Loves ;
With tender *Billet-doux* he lights the Pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the Fire :
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent Eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the Prize :
The Pow'rs gave Ear, and granted half his Pray'r,
The rest, the Winds dispers'd in empty Air.

But now secure the painted Vessel glides,
The Sun-beams trembling on the floating Tydes ;
While melting Musick steals upon the Sky ;
And soften'd Sounds along the Waters die.
Smooth flow the Waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd and all the World was gay.
All but the *Sylph*—With careful Thoughts opprest,
Th' impending Woe sate heavy on his Breast.

He summons strait his Denizens of Air;
The lucid Squadrons round the Sails repair:
Soft o'er the Shrouds Aerial Whispers breathe,
That seem'd but *Zephyrs* to the Train beneath.
Some to the Sun their Insect-Wings unfold,
Waft on the Breeze, or sink in Clouds of Gold;
Transparent Forms, too fine for mortal Sight,
Their fluid Bodies half dissolv'd in Light.
Loose to the Wind their airy Garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring Textures of the filmy Dew,
Dipt in the richest Tincture of the Skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling Dies;
While ev'ry Beam new transient Colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their Wings.
Amid the Circle, on the gilded Mast,
Superior by the Head, was *Ariel* plac'd;
His Purple Pinions opening to the Sun,
He rais'd his Azure Wand, and thus begun.
Ye *Sylphs* and *Sylphids*, to your Chief give Ear!
Fays, *Fairies*, *Genii*, *Elves* and *Daemons* hear!
Ye know the Spheres and various Tasks assign'd,
By Laws Eternal to th' Aerial Kind,
Some in the Fields of purest *Ether* play,
And bask and whiten in the Blaze of Day.
Some guide the Course of wandering Orbs on high,
Or roll the Planets thro' the boundless Sky.
Some less refin'd, beneath the Moon's pale Light
Pursue the Stars that shoot athwart the Night.
Or suck the Mists in grosser Air below,
Or dip their Pinions in the painted Bow,
Or brew fierce Tempests on the wintry Main,
Or o'er the Glebe distill the kindly Rain.
Other on Earth o'er human Race preside,
Watch all their Ways, and all Actions guide:
Of these the Chief the Care of Nations own,
And guard with Arms Divine the *British Throne*.

Our humbler Province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious Care,
To save the Powder from too rude a Gale,
Nor let th' imprison'd Essences Exhale;
To draw fresh Colours from the vernal Flow'rs;
To steal from Rainbows, ere they drop in Show'rs,

A brighter Wash ; to curl their waving Hairs,
Assist their Blushes, and inspire their Airs ;
Nay oft, in dreams, Invention we bestow,
To change a *Flounce*, or add a *Furbelow*.

This Day, black Omens threat the brightest Fair
That e'er deserv'd a watchful Spirit's Care ;
Some dire disaster, or by Force, or Slight ;
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt in Night.
Whether the Nymph shall break *Diana's* Law,
Or some frail *China* Jar receive a Flaw :
Or stain her Honour, or her new Brocade ;
Forget her Pray'rs, or miss a Masquerade ;
Or lose her Heart, or Necklace, at a Ball ;
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that *Shock* must fall.
Haste then ye Spirits ! to your Charge repair ;
The flutt'ring Fan be *Zephyretta's* Care ;
The Drops to thee, *Brillante*, we consign ;
And, *Momentilla*, let the Watch be thine ;
Do thou, *Crispissa*, tend her fav'rite Lock ;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of *Shock*.

To fifty chosen *Sylphs*, of special Note,
We trust th' important Charge, the *Petticoat* :
Oft have we known that sev'nfold Fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with Hoops, and arm'd with Ribs of Whale.
Form a strong Line about the Silver Bound,
And guard the wide Circumference around.

Whatever Spirit, careless of his Charge,
His Post neglects, or leaves the Fair at large,
Shall feel sharp Vengeance soon o'ertake his Sins,
Be stop'd in *Vials*, or transfixt with *Pins* ;
Or plung'd in Lakes of bitter *Washes* lie,
Or wedg'd whole *Ages* in a *Bodkin's* Eye :
Gums and *Pomatums* shall his Flight restrain,
While clogg'd he beats his silken Wings in vain :
Or Alom-*Stypticks* with contracting Power
Shrink his thin Essence like a rivell'd Flower.
Or as *Ixion* fix'd, the Wretch shall feel
The giddy Motion of the whirling Mill ;
In Fumes of burning Chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the Sea that froths below !

He spoke ; the Spirits from the Sails descend ;

Some, Orb in Orb, around the Nymph extend ;
Some thrid the mazy Ringlets of her Hair ;
Some hang upon the Pendents of her Ear ;
With beating Hearts the dire Event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the Birth of Fate.

CANTO III

Close by those Meads, for ever crown'd with Flow'rs,
Where *Thames* with Pride surveys his rising Tow'rs,
There stands a Structure of Majestic Frame,
Which from the neighb'ring *Hampton* takes its Name.
Here *Britain's* Statesmen oft the Fall foredoom
Of Foreign Tyrants, and of Nymphs at home ;
Here Thou, Great *Anna !* whom three Realms obey,
Dost sometimes Counsel take—and sometimes *Tea.*
Hither the Heroes and the Nymph resort,
To taste awhile the Pleasures of a Court ;
In various Talk the instructive hours they past,
Who gave the *Ball*, or paid the *Visit* last :
One speaks the Glory of the *British Queen*,
And one describes a charming *Indian Screen* ;
A third interprets Motions, Looks and Eyes ;
At ev'ry Word Reputation dies.
Snuff, or the *Fan*, supply each Pause of Chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Meanwhile declining from the Noon of Day,
The Son obliquely shoots his burning Ray ;
The hungry Judges soon the Sentence sign,
And Wretches hang that Jurymen may Dine ;
The Merchant from th' *Exchange* returns in Peace,
And long Labours of the Toilette cease—
Belinda, now, whom Thirst of Fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous Knights,
At *Ombre* singly to decide their Doom ;
And swells her Breast with Conquests yet to come.
Strait the three Bands prepare in Arms to join,
Each Bond the number of the Sacred Nine.
Soon as she spreads her Hand, th' Aerial Guard
Descend, and sit on each important Card ;
First *Ariel* perch'd upon a *Matadore*,
Then each according to the Rank they bore ;

For *Sylphs*, yet mindful of their ancient Race,
Are, as when Women, wondrous fond of Place.

Behold, four *Kings* in Majesty rever'd ;
With hoary Whiskers and forky Beard ;
And four fair *Queens*, whose hands sustain a Flow'r,
Th' expressive Emblem of their softer Pow'r ;
Four *Knaves* in Garbs succinct, a trusty Band,
Caps on their heads ; and Halberds in their hand ;
And Particolour'd Troops, shining Train,
Draw forth to Combat on the Velvet Plain.

The skilful Nymph reviews her Force with Care :
"*Let Spades be Trumps* !" she said, and Trumps they were.

Now move to War her Sable *Matadores*,
In Show like Leaders of the swarthy *Moors*.
Spadillio first, unconquerable Lord !
Led off two captive Trumps, and swept the Board.
As many more *Manillio* forc'd to yield,
And march'd a Victor from the verdant Field.
Him *Basto* follow'd ; But his Fate more hard,
Gain'd but one Trump and one *Plebeian* Card.
With his broad Sabre next, a Chief in Years,
The hoary Majesty of *Spade* ; appears ;
Puts forth one manly Leg, to sight reveal'd,
The rest, his many colour'd Robe conceal'd.
The Rebel *Knave*, who dares his Prince engage,
Proves the just Victim of his Royal Rage,
Ev'n mighty *Pam*, that Kings and Queen o'erthrew,
And mow'd down Armies in the Fights of *Lu*,
Sad Chance of War ! now, destitute of Aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the Victor *Spade* !

Thus far both Armies to *Belinda* yield,
Now to the *Baron* fate inclines the Field.
His warlike *Amazon* her Host invades,
Th' Imperial Consort of the crown of *Spades*.
The *Club's* black Tyrant first her Victim dy'd,
Spite of his haughty Mien and barb'rous pride :
What boots the Regal Circle on his Head,
His Giant Limbs in State unwieldy spread ?
That long behind he trails his pompous Robe,
And of all Monarchs, only grasps the Globe ?

The *Baron* now his *Diamonds* pours apace ;

Th' embroider'd *King*, who shows but half his Face,
And his refulgent *Queen*, with Powe'rs combin'd,
Of broken Troops an easie Conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild Disorder seen;
With Throngs promiscuous strow the level Green.
Thus when dispers'd a routed Army runs,
Of *Asia's* Troops and *Africk's* Sable Sons,
With like Confusion different Nations fly,
Of various Habit and of various dye;
The pierc'd Battalions disunited fall,
In Heaps on Heaps; one Fate o'erwhelms them all.
The *Knave* of *Diamonds* tries his wily Arts,
And wins (oh shameful Chance!) the *Queen* of *Hearts*.
At this, the Blood the Virgin's Cheek forsook,
A livid Paleness spreads o'er all her Look;
She sees, and trembles at the approaching Ill,
Just in the Jaws of Ruin, and *Codille*.
And now, (as oft in some distemper'd State)
On one nice *Trick* depends the general Fate;
An *Ace* of Hearts steps forth: the King unseen
Lurk'd in her Hand, and mourn'd his captive *Queen*.
He Springs to Vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like Thunder on the prostrate *Ace*.
The Nymph exulting fills with Shouts the Sky;
The Walls, the Woods, and long Canals reply.
O thoughtless Mortals, ever blind to Fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate!
Sudden these Honours shall be snatch'd away,
And curs'd for ever this Victorious Day.

For lo! the Board with Cups and spoons is crown'd,
The Berries crackle, and the Mill turns round.
On shining Altars of *Japan* they raise
The silver Lamp; the fiery Spirits blaze.
From silver Spouts the grateful Liquors glide,
While *China's* earth receives the smoking Tyde.
At once they gratify their Scent and Taste
And frequent Cups prolong the rich Repast.
Strait hover round the Fair her Airy Band;
Some, as she sip'd the fuming liquor fann'd.
Some o'er her Lap their careful Plumes display'd,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich Brocade.
Coffee, (which makes the Politician wise,

And see thro' all things with his half-shut Eyes)
Sent up in Vapours to the *Baron's* brain
New Stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah, cease rash Youth ! desist ere 'tis too late
Fear the just Gods, and think of *Scylla's* Fate !
Chang'd to a Bird, and sent to flit in Air,
She dearly pays for *Nisus*' injur'd Hair !
But when to Mischief Mortals bend their Will,
How soon they find fit instrument of Ill !
Just then, *Clarissa* drew with tempting Grace
A two-edg'd Weapon from her shining Case :
So Ladies in Romance assist their knight,
Present the Spear, and arm him for the Fight.
He takes the Gift with rev'rence, and extends
The Little Engine on his Fingers' Ends ;
This just behind *Belinda's* Neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant Streams she bends her Head.
Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprites repair ;
A thousand Wings, by turns, blow back the Hair ;
And thrice they twitch'd the Diamond in her Ear ;
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the Foe drew near,
Just in that instant, anxious *Ariel* sought ;
The close Recesses of the Virgin's Thought ;
As on the Nosegay in her Breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' Ideas rising in her Mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her Art,
An Earthly Lover lurking at her Heart,
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his Pow'r expir'd,
Resign'd to Fate, and with a sight retired.

The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring *Forfex* wide,
T' inclose the Lock ; now joins it, to divide,
Ev'n then before the fatal Engine clos'd,
A wretched *Sylph* too foundly interpos'd ;
Fate urg'd the Sheers, and cut the *Sylph* in twain,
(But airy substance soon unites again)
The meeting points the sacred Hair dissever
From the fair Head, for ever, and for ever !
Then flash'd the living Ligtning from her Eyes,
And Screams of Horror rend the affrighted Skies.
Not louder Shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast,
When Husbands or when Lap-dogs breathe their last.
Or when rich *China* vessels fallen from high,

In glitt'ring Dust and Painted fragments lie !

Let Wreath of Triumphs now my Temples twine,
(The Victor cry'd) the glorious Prize is mine !
While Fish in Streams, or Birds delight in Air,
Or in a Coach and Six the *British* fair :
As long as *Atalantis* shall he read,
Or the small Pillow grace a Lady's Bed ;
While *Visits* shall be Paid on solemn Days,
When numerous Wax-lights in bright Order blaze,
While Nymphs take Treats, or Assignations give.
So long my Honour, Name, and Praise shall live !

What time wou'd spare from steel receives its date ;
And Monuments, like Men, submit to Fate !
Steal cou'd the Labour of the Gods destroy ;
And strike to dust th' imperial Tow'rs of *Troy* ;
Steal cou'd the Works of mortal pride confound,
And hew Triumphal Arches to the Ground,
What Wonder then, fair Numph ! thy hairs shou'd feel
The conqu'ring Force of unresisted steel ?

CANTO IV

But anxious Cares the Nymph opprest
And secret Passions labour'd in her Breast,
Not youthful Kings in Battle siez'd alive,
Not scornful Virgins who their Charms survive,
Not ardent Lovers robb'd of all their Bliss,
Not ancient Ladies when refus'd a Kiss,
Not Tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not *Cynthia* when her *Manteau's* pinn'd awry,
E'er felt such Rage, Resentment, and Despair,
As Thou, sad Virgin ! for thy ravish'd Hair.

For, that sad moment, when the *Sylphs* withdrew,
And *Ariel* weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sully'd the fair face of Light,
Down to the Central Earth, his proper Scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy care of *Spleen*.

Swift on his sooty Pinions flitts the *Gnome*,
And in a Vapour reach'd the dismal Dome.
No cheerful Breeze the sullen Region knows,
The dreaded *East* is all the Wind that blows.

Here, in a Grotto sheltered close from Air,
And screen'd in Shades from Day's detested Glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive Bed,
Pain at her Side, and *Megrim* at her Head.

Two Handmaids wait the Throne: Alike in Place,
But diff'ring far in Figure and in Face.
Here stood *Ill-nature* like an *ancient Maid*.
Her wrinkled Form in *Black* and *White* array'd:
With store of Prayers, for Mornings, Nights and Noons,
Her Hand is fill'd; her Bosom with Lampoons.

There *Affectation*, with a sickly Mien
Shows in her Cheek the Roses of Eighteen;
Practis'd to Lisp, and hang the Head aside,
Faints into Airs, and languishes with Pride;
On the rich Quilt sinks with becoming Woe,
Wrapt in a Gown, for Sickness, and for Show.
The Fair-ones feel such Maladies as these,
When each new Night-Dress gives a new Disease.
A constant *Vapour* o'er the Palace flies;
Strange Phantoms rising as the Mists arise;
Dreadful as Hermit's dreams in haunted Shades,
Or bright as Visions of expiring Maids.
Now glaring Fiends, and Snakes on rolling Spires,
Pale Spectres, gaping Tombs, and Purple Fires:
Now Lakes of liquid Gold, *Elysian* Scenes,
And Crystal Domes, And Angels in Machines.

Unnumber'd Throngs, on ev'ry side are seen,
Of Bodies changed to various Forms by *Spleen*.
Here living *Tea-pots* stand, one Arm held out:
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:
A Pipkin there, like *Homer's Tripod*, walks;
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pye talks;
Men prove with Child, as pow'rful Fancy works:
And Maids, turn'd Bottles call aloud for Corks.

Safe past the *Gnome* thro' this fantastic Band,
A Branch of healing *Spleenwort* in his hand:
Then thus addrest the Pow'r—Hail, wayward Queen!
Who rule the Sex to fifty from Fifteen:
Parent of Vapors and of Female Wit,
Who give th' *Hysteric* or *Poetic* Fit,
On various Tempers act by various ways,

Make some take Physick, others scribble Plays ;
Who cause the Proud their Visits to delay,
And send the Godly in a Pett, to pray.
A Nymph there is, that all thy Pow'r disdains,
And thousands more in equal Mirth maintains.
But, oh ! if e'er the *Gnome* could spoil a Grace,
Or raise a Pimple on a beauteous Face,
Like Citron-Waters Matrons' Cheeks inflame,
Or change Complexions at a losing Game ;
If e'er with Hairy Horns I planted Heads,
Or rumpled Petticoats, or tumbled Beds,
Or caus'd Suspicion when no Soul was rude,
Or discompos'd the Head-dress of a Prude,
Or e'er to costive Lap-Dog gave Disease,
Which not the Tears of brightest eyes could ease :
Hear me, and touch *Belinda* with Chagrin ;
That single act gives half the World the Spleen.

The Goddess with a discontented Air
Seems to reject him, tho' she grants his Pray'r,
A wondrous Bag with both her Hands she binds,
Like that where once *Ulysses* held the Winds ;
There she collects the Force of Female Lungs,
Sighs, Sobs, and Passions, and the War of Tongues.
A Vial next she fills with fainting Fears,
Soft, Sorrows, melting Griefs and flowing Tears.
The *Gnome* rejoicing bears her Gifts away,
Spreads his black Wings, and slowly mounts to Day.
Sunk in *Thalestris'* Arms the Nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected and her hair unbound :
Full o'er their Heads the swelling Bag he rent,
And all the Furies issued at the Vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal Ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising Fire.
O wretched Maid ! she spread her Hands and cry'd,
(While *Hampton' s* Echoes, wretched Maid ! reply'd)
"Was it for this you took such constant Care
The *Bodkin, Comb* and *Essence* to prepare ?
For this your Locks in Paper-Durance bound ?
For this with tort'ring Irons wreath'd around ?
For this with Fillets strain'd your tender Head ?
And bravely bore the double Loads of Lead ?
Gods ! shall the Ravisher display your Hair,

While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare ?
Honour forbid ! at whose unrivall'd Shrine
Ease, Pleasure, Virtue, All our Sex resign,
Me thinks already I your Tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say ;
Already see you a degraded Toast,
And all your Honour in a Whisper lost !
How shall I, then, your helpless Fame defend ?
'Twill then be Infamy to your Friend !
And shall this prize, th' inestimable Prize,
Expos'd thro' Crystal to the gazing Eyes.
And heighten'd by the Diamond's circling Rays,
On that Rapacious Hand for ever blaze ?
Sooner shall Grass in *Hide-Park Circus* grow,
And Wits take Lodgings in the Sound of *Bow* ;
Sooner let Earth, Air, Sea, to *Chaos* fall
Men, Monkeys, Lap-dogs, parrots, Perish all !"

She said ; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her *Beau* demand the precious hairs :
(*Sir Plume, of Amber Snuff for justly vain,*
And the nice Conduct of *Clouded Cane.*)
With earnest Eyes, and round unthinking Face,
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the Case,
And thus broke out—"My lord, why what the Devil ?
Z—ds ! damn the Lock !' fore Gad, you must be civil !
Plague on 't ! 'tis past a Jest—nay, prithee, Pox !
Give her the Hair !"—He spoke and rapp'd his Box.

It grieves me much, (reply'd the Peer again.)
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain.
But by this Lock, this sacred Lock I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted Hair,
Which never more its Honours shall renew,
Clipt from the lovely Head where late it grew)
That while my nostrils draw the vital Air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.
He spoke, and speaking, in proud Triumph spread
The long-contended Honours of her Head.

But *Umbriel*, hateful *Gnome* ! forbears not so ;
He breaks the Vial whence the Sorrows flow .
Then see ! the *Nymph* in beauteous *Grief* appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half drown'd in Tears :

On her heav'd Bosom hung her drooping Head,
Which, with a Sigh, she rais'd ; and thus she said.

For ever curs'd be this detested Day,
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite Curl away !
Happy ! ah, ten times happy, had I been,
If *Hampton-Court* these Eyes had never seen !
Yet am not I the first mistaken Maid,
By love of *Courts* to num'rous Ills betray'd.
Oh, had I rather un-admir'd remain'd
In some lone Isle, or distant *Northern* Land ;
Where the gilt *Chariot* never marks the Way,
Where none learn *Ombre*, none e'er taste *Bohea* !
There kept my Charms conceal'd from mortal Eye,
Like Roses, that in Deserts bloom and die.
What mov'd my Mind with youthful Lords to Rome ?
O had I stay'd, and said my Pray'rs at home !
'Twis this, the Morning *Omens* seem'd to tell ;
Thrice from any trembling hand the *Patch-box* fell ;
The tott'ring *China* shook without a Wind ;
Nay, *Poll* sat mute, and *Shock* was most Unkind !
A *Sylph* too warn'd me of the Threats of Fate,
In mystic Visions, now believ'd too late !
See the poor Remnants of these slighted Hairs !
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy Rapine spares :
These, in two sable Ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new Beauties to the snowie Neck ;
The sister-Lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its Fellow's Fate foresees its own ;
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal Sheers demands ;
And tempts, once more, thy sacrilegious Hands.
Oh hadst thou, Cruel ! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these !

CANTO V

She said : the pitying audience melt in Tears,
But *Fate* and *Jove* had stopp'd the *Baron's* Ears.
In vain *Thalestris* with Reproach assails ;
For who can move when fair *Belinda* fails ?
Not half so fixt the *Trojan* cou'd remain.
While Anna begg'd and *Dido* rag'd in vain.
Then grave *Clarissa* graceful wav'd her Fan ;
Silence ensu'd, and thus the Nymph began.

Say, why are Beauties prais'd and honour'd most,
The wise Man's Passion, and the vain Man's Toast?
Why deck'd with all that Land and Sea afford,
Why Angels call'd, and Angel-like ador'd?
Why round our Coaches crowd the white-glov'd Beaus,
Why bows the Side-box from its inmost Rows?
How vain are all these Glories, all our Pains,
Unless good Sense preserve what Beauty gains:
That Men may say, when we the Front-box grace,
Behold the first in Virtue, as in Face!
Oh! if to dance all Night, and dress all Day,
Charm'd the Small-pox, or chas'd old Age away;
Who would not scorn what Huswife's Cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly Thing of Use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a Saint,
Nor could it sure be such a Sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail Beauty must decay;
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to grey;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a Man, must die a Maid;
What then remains, but well our Pow'r to use,
And keep good-Humour still, whate'er we lose?
And trust me, Dear! good Humour can prevail,
When Airs, and Flights, and Screams, and Scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty Eyes may roll;
Charms strike the Sight, but Merit wins the Soul.
So spoke the Dame, but no Applause ensu'd;
Belinda frown'd, *Thalestris* call'd her Prude,
'To Arms, to Arms'! the fierce Virago cries,
And swift as Lightning to the Combat flies.
All side in Parties, and begin th' Attack;
Fans clap, Silks rustle, and tough Whalebones crack;
Heroes' and Heroins' Shouts confus'dly rise,
And base and treble Voices strike the Skies.
No common Weapons in their Hands are found;
Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal Wound.
So when bold *Homer* makes the Gods engage,
And heav'nly Breasts with human Passions rage;
'Gainst *Pallas*, *Mars*; *Latona*, *Hermes* Arms;
And all *Olympus* rings with loud Alarms.
Jove's Thunder roars, Heav'n trembles all around:
Blue *Neptune* storms, the bellowing Deeps resound;

Earth shakes her nodding Tow'rs, the Ground gives way,
And the pale Ghosts start at the Flash of Day !

Triumphant *Umbriel* on a Sconce's Height
Clapt his glad Wings, and state to view the Fight :
Propp'd on their Bodkin Spears, the Sprites survey
The growing Combat, or assist the Fray.

While thro' the Press enrag'd *Thalestris* flies,
And scatters Death around from both her Eyes,
A *Beau* and *Witling* perish'd in the Throng ;
One dy'd in *Metaphor* and one in *Song*,
'*O cruel Nymph ! a living Death I bear !*'
Cry'd *Dapperwit*, and sunk beside his Chair,
A mournful glance Sir *Fopling* upwards cast,
Those eyes are made so killing !—was his last :
Thus on *Meander's* flow'ry *Margin* lies
Th' expiring Swan, and as he sings he dies.

When bold Sir *Plume* had drawn *Clarissa* down,
Chloe step'd in, and kill'd him with a Frown ;
She smil'd to see the doughty Hero slain,
But, at her Smile, the Beau reviv'd again.

Now *Jove* suspends his golden Scale in Air,
Weighs the Men's Wits against the Lady's Hair ;
The doubtful Beam long nods from side to side ;
At length the Wits mount up, the hairs subside.

See, fierce *Belinda* on the *Baron* flies
With more than usual Lightning in her Eyes :
Nor fear'd the chief th' unequal Fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his Foe to die.
But this bold Lord, with manly Strength endu'd,
She with one Finger and a Thumb subdu'd :
Just where the Breath of life his Nostrils drew,
A charge of *Snuff* the wily Virgin threw ;
The *Gnomes* direct, to ev'ry Atome just,
The pungent Grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting Tears each Eye o'erflows,
And the high Dome re-echoes to his Nose.

Now meet thy Fate, incens'd *Belinda* cry'd,
And drew a deadly *Bodkin* from her Side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great great Grandsire wore about his Neck,

In three *Seal-Rings* which after, melted down,
Form'd a vast *Buckle* for his Widow's Gown :
Her infant Grandame's *Whistle* next it grew ;
The *Bells* she gingled, and the *Whistle* blew ;
Then in a *Badkin* grac'd her Mother's Hairs,
Which long she wore, and now *Belinda* wears.)
'Boast not may fall,' (he cry'd) 'insulting Foe !
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low.
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty Mind ;
All that I dread is leaving you behind !
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in *Cupid's* Flames—but burn alive.'

Restore the Lock ! she cries ; and all around,
Restore the Lock ! the vaulted Roofs rebound.
Not fierce *Othello* in so loud a Strain
Roar'd for the Handkerchief that caus'd his Pain.
But see how oft Ambitious aims are cross'd,
And Chiefs contend till all the Prize is lost ;
The lock, obtain'd with Guilt, and kept with Pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain :
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So Heav'n decrees ! with Heav'n who can contest ?
Some thought it mounted to the Lunar Sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasur'd there.
There Heroes' Wits are kept in ponderous Vases,
And Beaus' in *Snuff boxes* and *Tweezer Cases* :
There broken Vows and Death-bed Alms are found,
And Lovers' Hearts with Ends of Riband bound ;
The Courtier's Promises, and Sick Man's Pray'rs,
The Smiles of Harlots, and the Tears of Heirs,
Cages for Gnats, and Chains to Yoak a Flea,
Dry'd Butterflies, and Tomes of Casuistry.
But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Tho' mark'd by none but quick, Poetic Eyes ;
(So *Rome's* great Founder to the Heav'ns withdrew,
To *Proculus* alone confess'd in view).
A sudden Star, it shot thro' liquid Air,
And drew behind a radiant *Trail of Hair*,
Not *Bernice's* Locks first rose so bright,
The Heav'ns bespangling with dishevel'd Light.
The *Sylphs* behold it kindling as it flies,
And Pleas'd pursue its Progress thro' the Skies.

This the *Beau-monde* shall from the *Mall* survey,
And hail with Musick its propitious Ray ;
This the blest lover shall for *Venus* take,
And send up Vows from *Rosamonda's* Lake.
This *Partridge* soon shall view in cloudless Skies,
When next he looks thro' *Galileo's* Eyes :
And hence th' Egregious Wizard shall foredoom.
The Fate of *Louis* and the fall of *Rome*.

Then cease, bright Nymph ! to mourn thy ravish'd Hair
Which adds new Glory to the shining Sphere ;
Not all the Tresses that fair Head can boast,
Shall draw such Envy as the Lock you lost.
For after all the murders of your eye,
When, after Millions Slain, yourself shall die ;
When those fair Suns shall set, asset they must,
And all those Tresses shall be laid in Dust :
This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to Fame,
And 'midst the Stars inscribe *Belinda's* Name !

NOTES

To Mrs. Arabella Fermor—From the verse of Martial, a Roman epigrammatic poet quoted above the letter, it appears that Pope published the poem with the consent and at the request of Mrs. Arabella Fermor. The first sketch was published in 1717 in two Cantos, and later after the introduction of the supernatural machinery ("Deities, Angels, or Daemons", as he puts it,) the completed poem in five Cantos was published in 1714. In the letter of dedication Pope refers to "The Rosicrucian Doctrine of Spirits."

Rosicrucian—(Lat. *ros*, dew ; or *rosa*, rose ; *crux* cross) is the name given to a secret brotherhood, suppossed to have been founded by Christian Rosankreutz. Its sign was a rosy cross and its name has been derived from dew (*ros*), regarded as a solvent of gold, and identified with light because the figure of a cross (*crux*) contains in various presentations, the three capital letters of the word *lux i. e.*, light or knowledge. Much mystery surrounds the origin of the Rosicrucians, who were first heard of in the seventeenth century as the Brethren of the Rosy Cross. Whether there was such a person as Rosenkreutz, the legendary founder, is doubtful. The doctrine of the Rosicrucians was a mixture of religion and magic, and had as its aim the healing of the sick, and the relief of poverty with wealth, gained by changing base metals into gold.

Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, Salamanders are mentioned as being obtained from the Rosicrucian source. These terms need to be explained.

(1) Sylphs—Elemental spirits of air. The term came to be used in the Middle Ages by the Rosicrucians and Cabalists from Greek *silphe*, a kind of beetle, grub or moth, but it is difficult to see the connection. The word was used by Paracelsus, who perhaps derived it from, *sylva*, *wood* and *nymph*.

Pope says that any mortal who has preserved inviolate chastity, might enjoy intimate familiarity with these gentle spirits and that decreased coquettes become sylphs and "sport and flutter in the fields of air."

(2) **Gnomes**—Mis-shapen elemental spirits, dwelling in the bowels of the earth, and guarding the mines and quarries. The word was first used by Paracelsus ; perhaps from Greek *Ge*, earth—*nomos*, dwelling in, or simply from *gnome*, intelligence, from their knowledge of things underground.

(3) **Nymphs**—The ancient Greeks peopled the Mediterranean, rivers, mountains, groves, glens, and trees with beautiful young divinities, called Oceanides, Nereides, Nacades, Oreades, Alseides, Napaeae, and Dryades, respectively. Nymphs had nothing to do with the Rosicrucians.

(4) **Salamanders**—According to Paracelsus, elemental beings inhabiting fire. They are spirits of fire, gnomes are of the earth, sylphs of the air, and undines of the water. Pope says:

> The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame
> Mount up, and take a Salamander's name.

CANTO I

Analysis—The poet at first expresses surprise at the thought of 'mighty contests rising from trivial things.' He then states how a well-bred Lord assaulted a gentle Belle. In a typical mock-heroic vein, Pope says that he cannot find any plausible reason why Little Men should be engaged in bold tasks, or why even soft women should be so angry.

Pope then describes the awakening of Belinda. She at first opens her eyes ; then rings a hand-bell which not being answered she knocks with her slipper. After that she falls asleep again. Ariel now summons dream in which he figures in a disguise calculated to interest Belinda—the disguise of a beau dressed for a birthday state ball. Belinda felt in her dream that this beau was whispering in her ears. He seemed to praise her beauty. He then informed her that 'unnumbered spirits round her fly, the light Militia of the lower sky.' These spirits hang round the air, over the Box, and round the Ring.

These spirits, moreover, assume various shapes and forms. There are also some nymphs, who are too conscious of their beauty. They teach the eyes of young coquettes to roll and instruct infant-cheeks to know a 'bidden blush.' The sylphs guide the women through mazy paths, and the women folks seem to be astray.

Ariel says that he is one of these sylphs and is ready to grant protection to Belinda. He has come to warn her, as he foresaw a dreadful event impending. He finally warns Belinda, and asks her to beware of Man.

Belinda's lap-dog now awakens her. Belinda sees the billet-doux the first (if report says true) that she had ever received. After that Belinda starts her toilet. The poet describes vividly the various cosmetics arranged in her wardrobe. The sylphs are described surrounding the beauty and arranging her toilet. So, in fact, Belinda's maid actually does nothing, all being done by the sylphs, though the maid is all the same praised for labour 'not her own.'

Critical Remarks : It will be interesting to note that Pope has composed this Canto in a typical mock-heroic tone. He states the discrepancy, affected by the mock-heroic, when he writes :

"In Tasks so bold, can Little Men engage,
And in soft Bosoms dwells such mighty Rage ?"

Pope also follows the tradition of heroic epics, when he brings in Ariel summoning a dream in which he figures as a 'Birth-night Beau'. Pope also parodies the arming of the epic hero, when he says :

"Now awful Beauty puts on all its Arms :"

and what are these Arms ?

"Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux."

Thus we find that from the very beginning, Pope employs the mock-heroic style in writing the poem. His use of the sylphs is also very interesting. The positions and functions of these numerous earthly and aerial spirits are described with vivid details.

Notes and Explanations

3. **This Verse**..............—See Introduction 'Occasion of the Poem.'

5. *Cf* Virgil 'Georgics, iv. 6, 7.

8. **Belle**—handsome woman ; reigning beauty.

11. **Little Men**—most probably refers to Lord Petre's short figure, *Cf*. Hor., 'Odyssey' II. xvi. 17.

13 **Sol**—Tendency to use classical name and titles prominent in the early part of the eighteenth century. Phoebus, Titan, Sol, were superseding the simple sun.

14. **Must**—are ordained. See 'Lycidas', 38.

15. **Lap-dogs**—There are many references in English to

these pets of the ladies, from Chaucer's Prologue, downwards.

17. It appears that three rings of the bell with a tap on the floor with a slipper were the signal that the sleeper had arisen.

19. **Prest**—Pressed.

20. **Sylph**—See Introduction. 'Characters in the Poem.'

22. *Cf.* 'Il Penseroso', 147.

23. **Birth-night Beau**—A fine gentleman, such as to be seen at the state ball given on the anniversary of the royal birthday. *Cf.* 'Satires of Dr. Donne Versified', iv. 130 :

> "Mere household trash ! of birth-nights, balls, and shows
> More than ten Holinsheds, or Halls, or Stow,
> When the queen frown'd, or smiled, he knows."

Cf. also Spectator, No. 15 : "A ball is a great help to discourse and a birth-night furnishes conversation for a twelve month after."

26. **Pope is parodying**—Virgil's 'Aeneid', vi. 454, and 'Paradise Lost', i. 781.

30. **The Nurse and all the Priest...**—the nurse and the priest were considered by seventeenth-century philosophers and educationists as the chief inlets of superstition. *Cf.* Dryden's 'Hind and Panther,' Part III, 1686—

> "The priest continues what the nurse began,
> And thus the child imposes on the man."

32. **The silver token**—*Cf.* Bishop Corbet's "The Fairies' Farewell" :

> "And though they sweepe the hearths no lesse
> Than maides were wont to doe,
> Yet who of late for cleanlinesse
> Findes six pence in her shoe ?"

It was supposed in those days that fairies left a silver coin in the slipper of dutiful maid-servants.

32. **Circled green**—*Cf.* Dryden's 'Hind and Panther', Part I, 212 :

> "As where in the fields the fairy rounds are seen."

According to Dr. Grey, "Ringlets of grass are very common in meadows, which are higher, sowrer and of a deeper green than the grass that grows round them ; and by the common people are usually called Fairy Circles." The most clear and satisfactory remarks on the origin of fairy rings are probably those of Dr. Wollaston, Sec. R. S., printed in the second part of his 'Philosophical Transactions for 1807" : made during a

few years' residence in the country. The cause of their appearance he ascribes to the growth of certain species of agaric which so entirely absorb all nutriment from the soil beneath that the herbage is for a while destroyed. (From Ellis's 'Popular Antiquities', Notes to 'Fairy Mythology.')

36. **Narrow**—'Narrow' is used here "proleptically" or anticipatingly, as adjectives are often used in Latin and in Greek.

37. Pope here parodies the new testament,—St. Matthew, xi, 25.

42. **Militia**—"There was scarcely yet that sharp antithesis between 'the militia', and 'the army', which prevailed afterwards. The idea of a 'standing army' was scarcely yet altogether accepted by the nation. The first 'Mutiny Act' was passed in 1869."

44. **The Box**—Seats at the opera. **The Ring**—The Ring was north of the eastern end of what is now the Serpentine, and being on high ground had views of open country on almost all sides. *Cf.* 'Spectator', No. 15 : "She thinks life lost in her own family, and fancies herself out of the world when she is not in the Ring, the playhouse, or the drawing-room."

47. Expl : "The poet here forsakes the Rosicrucian system, which in this part is too extravagant even for ludicrous poetry, and gives a beautiful fiction of his own on the Platonic Theology of the continuance of the Passions in another state, when the mind before its leaving this has not been well purged and purified by philosophy : which furnishes an occasion for much useful satire." (Warburton). It will be interesting to note in this connection that the origin of this system of soul-transmigration is Ovid's Metamorphoses,' xv.

56. **Ombre**—Expl. : The idea of the game at Ombre was suggested by Vida's Scacchia Ludus.' Vida was a Latin poet who flourished during the reign of Leo X. The Augustans, in the somewhat indiscriminate ardour of their Roman classicism netted in even Latin poets of the Renaissance. The game 'Ombre' was introduced into England about the middle of the seventeenth century from Spain, as its name and the names of its cards show. In Queen Anne's time it was the favourite game of the ladies as Piquet of the gentlemen, Whist or Whisk that of clergy-men and country squires, Chatto, in his 'History of Playing-Cards,' disproves the statement of

Barrington, that Ombre was probably introduced by Catherine of Portugal, the Queen of Charles II, by reference to a political pamphlet entitled, 'The Royal game of Ombre' published at London in 1660, two years before the Queen's arrival in England. The name 'Ombre' is of course derived from the Spanish word for 'a man.'

59. **Termagant**—according to Dr. Johnson, 'A scold ; a brawling turbulent woman.'

73. **Spark**—'A lively, showy, splendid, gay man. It is commonly used in contempt.' (Johnson). Compare 'flame.'

77. *Cf.* Dryden, 'Hind and the Panther,' iii, 823—

"Immortal pow'rs the term of conscience know,
But int'rest is her name with men below."

The line also parodies Homer.

79. **Too......Face**—too sensible of their beauty.

89. **Teach...blush to know**—with rouge.

94. **Impertinence**—trifle ; thing of no value (Johnson).

96. **Treat**—an entertainment of food and drink. *Cf.* a letter from prior to Swift : "I have treated Lady Harriot at Cambridge, and spoke verses to her in a gown and a cap."

100. They keep re-arranging the affection, so to speak. —*Cf.* Addison : "Fans, silk, ribbands, laces, and gewgaws lay so thick together, that the heart was nothing else but a toyshop."

101. **Sword-knots**—'Ribband tied to the hilt of the sword'. (Johnson).

105. **Thy protection**—my protection of thee. (Tillotson).

108. "The language of the Platonist, the writers of the intelligible world of spirits etc." (Pope).

113. **All thy guardian can**—all that is in thy guardian's power. "The Rosicrucian doctrine was delivered only to Adepts, with the utmost caution, and under the most solemn injunction of secrecy." (Warburton).

115. **Shock**—"A rough-coated dog." (Halliwell's Dictionary.) "Shoughs" are mentioned as species of dog in 'Macbeth,' III. i. 94.

121. **Toilet**—Toilet is strictly the cloth covering of the dressing-table ; a diminutive of French 'toile'.

127. **The inferior Priestess**—There is a small inaccuracy in these lines. He first makes his heroine the chief priestess, and then the goddess herself. (Warburton).

145. **The busy Sylphs**—'Ancient traditions of the Rabbis relate, that several of the fallen angels became amorous of women, and particularize some ; among the rest Asael, who lay with Naamah, the wife of Noah, or of Hom ; and who continuing impenitent, still presides over the women's toilets.' Bereshi Rabbi in Genes. vi. 2. (Pope).

146. **Set**—adjust, arrange. *Cf.* Swift's 'Cadenus and Vanessa.'

"Dear madam, let me set your head."

CANTO II

Analysis : The first few lines of this Canto are taken up with the description of Belinda's beauty. She is compared to the rising of the Sun "o'er the purpled Main." Her eyes are bright as the sun, and like the sun they shine on all sides. If she happens to commit any error, one looking on her face, is bound to forgive it. Now Belinda had two locks hanging down her neck, which tempted men. One 'Adventurous Baron' admired these bright locks, and was determined to get possession of them by any means. with this intent he prayed to Heaven and other Powers, especially Love, to grant him his wish. The Powers heard his prayer and granted half his prayer, the rest being dispersed by the Winds.

Belinda knew nothing of this, and was quite gay and merry as usual. But the watching Sylph, Ariel, was always cautious. Realizing the fate impending, he summoned his followers of the air. Here follows a description of these various sylphs and nymphs. Ariel then addressed them. He reminded them of their function ; how they tend the Fair ; how they 'draw fresh Colours from the vernal Flow'rs, and 'steal from Rainbows ere they drop in Show'rs a brighter Wash.' He then told them about the 'black Omens that threat the brightest Fair.' Ariel divided the various charges among his followers. "The flutt'ring Fan be Zephyretta's Care ; The Drops to thee Brillante, we consign ; And, Momentilla, let the Watch be thine ; Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite Lock ; and Ariel himself took the charge of guarding Shock. He allotted to fifty chosen sylphs the task of keeping guard over the 'petticoat,' which had been found often to be treacherous. Ariel concluded his speech by warning the sylphs, that whoever happened to be careless of his charge, would be punished severely.

As ordered by Ariel, the spirits came down from their aerial posts and lay surrounding Belinda, waiting anxiously for the unknown evil.

Critical remarks : This particular canto is remarkable for its minutest details in the description of the sylphs and other spirits. The picture of the 'Denizens of air' is full of sensuous beauty. We can almost see as we read those lines the sun rays glittering on the wings of the spirits, the wind blowing their loose garments, 'transparent forms. too fine for mortal sight.' We feel that Pope is writing in a Romantic vein ; he reminds us of Keats, in his picturesque description. Pope's satire obviously consists in showing epic qualities and motives at work on a small scale, and in suggesting, by the likeness of the characters in this poem to the epic character, the littleness of human affairs. ✓

Notes and Explanations

4. **The Silver Thames**—*Cf.* Spenser's 'Prothalamion.'

17-18. **If to her share.........all**—veiled irony in suggesting that a beautiful lady can have no faults.

19. *Cf.* 'Psalm' xv. 4 : 2 Kings xiv. 10, etc.

25. **Springes**—traps. *Cf.* 'Hamlet', V. ii. 317 :

"As a woodcock to my own springe, Osrick,
I'm justly killed with mine own treachery."

27. **Insnare**—ensnare.

Cf. 'Hudibras' :
"And tho' it be a two-foot trout,
'Tis with a single hair pulled out."

Disraeli quotes from Howell in his 'Curiosities of Literature' in his chapter on 'Poetical Imitations and Similiarities,' these lines : 'Tis a powerful sex ; they were too strong for the first, the strongest and wisest man that was ; they must need be strong when one hair of a woman can draw more than an hundred pair of oxen."

26. Pope here mimics 'Aeneid' xi. where Camilla, seeking to attack Chloreous, is tracked down by Arruns.

31. **Meditates**—decides : plans.

33-34. **For when success......ends**—Banter, comes easy to Pope. It is an allusion to the proverb—all's fair in love and war.

38. **Twelve vast French Romances**—the works of Calprenede Mad. Scuderi, La Fayette, and others ; *e. g.*, 'Cleopatra, Le Grand Cyrus, Clelie, Zayde,' etc. They are quite appro-

priately called 'vast', since 'Clelie' appeared in ten volumes of 800 pages each. The English translations of these volumes were also published in huge folios.

41. **Billet-doux**—love letter.

45. *Cf.* Virgil's 'Aeneid' XI. vv. 794—795.

47. **Secure**—free from care. The origin of the word is from the Latin 'securus'.

48. **Tydes**—*Cf.* Dryden :

'But let not all the gold which Tagus hides,
And pays the sea in tributary tides', 195.

49. **Melting Musick**—*Cf.* 'Il Penseroso', etc.

55. **Denizens**—Expl. The origin of the word is from the old French 'deinzein' (from 'deins', Latin 'de intus'), which means properly one who dwells within *i. e.*, within the city or who enjoys its franchise. The next meaning of the word came to be 'an inhabitant' ; then it came to be applied to a naturalized citizen. Here 'his Denizens' is used in the sense of 'his fellow-inhabitants.'

59. *Cf.* 'Paradise Lost', vii. 476—9.

60. **In Clouds of Gold**—This use of cloud is common enough : *e. g.*, see 'Paradise Lost', i. 340 : "a pitchy cloud of locusts, etc."

63. **To the wind**—*Cf.* 'Lycidas' 13.

64. **Filmy**—Properly 'film means a thin skin or pellicle. Here 'filmy dew' seems to be used in the sense of the film-like moisture that covers leaves. **Glitt'ring textures**—Milton's glittering tissues' (*Paradise Lost*, v. ; 92). Tissue and texture are radically identical.

65. **Dipt......tincture**—*Cf.* 'Paradise Lost,' v. 283 and 285.

66. **Dies**—dyes (colours).

70. **Superior by the head**—following the traditional characterization of epic heroes. *Cf.* Homer's 'iliad', iii. 168.

Ariel—The name of a spirit used in Cabalistic angelology, and in Haywood's *Hierarchie of the Blasted Angels* (1635) for one of the seven angelic "princes" who rule the waters ; by Milton for one of the rebel angels ; by Pope for a sylph, the guardian of Belinda ; but by Shakespeare, in *The Tempest*, for "an ayrie spirit".

73. **Sylphs and Sylphids**—The feminine form 'sylphid' is formed after the analogy of Achaeid or Achaead (Iliad, v. 424 Troad; etc.) This 'id' or 'ad' is also the Greek feminine patronymic sign. We can take, for example, Nereus and Nereid,

etc. This same termination is specially used to denote a poem or work, on some subject specified in the first part of the word : thus 'Thebaid'—poem on Thebes ; 'Aeneid'—poem on Aeneas ; 'Iliad'—poem on Ilium.

The speech of Ariel is a parody of 'Paradise Lost'.

74. The invocation here is, as is Satan's address to the 'Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers', in 'Paradise Lost'.

74. 'Fays, Fairies, Genii,' are names of Latin origin. 'Fays' and 'Fairies' are romance from the same root, the Latin 'fatum'. 'Elf' is of teutonic origin ; 'daemon' of Greek.

75. **Spheres**—originally used in the sense of a ball, globe, and then specially a planet. It seems to be used also for a Planet's path, or orbit, or circuit, and so far the area or region of its motion ; then generally it came to be used for any tract or district or province in which any body moves. *Cf.* Shakespeare, I Henry IV, V, iv. 65 :

"Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere."

So also Gonzalo speaks of the moon's sphere', ('Tempest' II, i. 182.)

We find again in 'Midsummer Night's Dream', II, i, 153 :

"And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music."

The general sense occurs in 'Antony and Cleopatra', II, vii. 15 :

"To be call'd into a huge sphere and not to be seen to move in, t", etc.

79. **Wandring Orbs**—meteors.

82. *Cf.* 'Paradise Lost', iv. 555-60, especially 556-7 :

"Swift as a shooting star".

84. **Bow**—rainbow.

85. **Main**—the full phrase is the 'main sea' ; so "main flood" (Merchant of Venice. IV. i. 72.)

86. **Glebe**—soil ; ground (political use.)

91. **Fair**—'fair' was commonly used as a substantive in the latter part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, after the French ; thus we find in the 'Spectator' : "Gentlemen who do not design to marry yet pay their devoirs to one particular fair ;" but it does not seem to have been adopted so far as to have a plural inflection.

97. **Wash**—'a medical or cosmetick lotion' (Johnson).

100. **Flounce**—Frizzle and curl.

Furbelow—strictly a kind of flounce; commonly, the fringed border of a gown or petticoat.

103. **Slight**—trick.

106. **China jar**—China-ware or porcelain "was first introduced into Europe in the beginning of the sixteenth century..............For a long time it was erroneously believed that China alone furnished the proper kind of clay necessary for its manufacture, and the circumstance, along with the then extremely rude state of the potter's art in Europe, prevented, for nearly two hundred years subsequent to its first introduction, any attempt towards the fabrication of this article in the west."

107. **Brocade**—"A stuff of gold, silver or silk, raised and enriched with flowers, foliage, and other ornaments. Formerly it signified only a stuff woven all of gold or silver, in which silk was mixed. At present all stuffs...........are so called if they are worked with flowers or other figures.l' (Pop. Encyclopaedia.) *Cf.* Gay :

> "Should you the rich brocaded suit unfold,
> where rising flow'rs grow stiff with frosted gold."

108. **Masquerade**—Masquerade came to be extremely popular since the days of the Restoration. They were suppressed by legal procedures in 1724, but presently revived with the connivance of the Government. Masquerades are actually balls or other functions at which masks or fancy dresses are worn.

112. **Fluttering Fan**—Fans with decorative work and radiating sections were much in fashion among ladies in those days.

118. It is impossible here not to recollect that matchless piece of raillery and exquisite humour of Addison in the 127th 'Spectator' on this important part of female dress: "........a touch of his pen would make it contract like a sensitive plant."

118-122. **We Trust...........circumference around**—A facetious description of the hoop, skirt or crinoline. The fabric called crinoline was made of horse-hair and cotton or linen and was used to stiffen skirts. It became the fashion for ladies to wear their skirts very wide and the word—crinoline came to be applied to their enormously expanded skirts and also to the frame, made of whale-bone and steel hoops over which they were drawn.

126. **Vials**—phials, small bottles.

128. **Bodkin**—originally a small dagger, as we find in 'Hamlet.' But here, it is used in sense of a large blunt needle. Pope also uses the word for an instrument used in dressing the hair ; thus :

> "Was it for this you took such constant Care
> The Bodkin, Comb, and Essence to prepare ?
> For this your Locks in Paper-Durance bound ?"
> (The Rape of the Lock, Canto IV, 97-99)

129. **Pomatums**—ointments.

131. **Stypticks**—an astringent, which stops bleeding.

132. **Rivell'd**—'contract (ed) into wrinkles and corrugations.' (Johnson).

134. **Mill**—chocolate mill. "Chocolate was introduced into Europe (from Mexico and the Brazils) about A. D. 1520. ....It was sold in the London coffee-houses soon after their establishment, 1650"

131. **Orb in orb**—circle in circle.

139. **Thrid**—a varied form of thread.

Canto III

Analysis : Most part of this Canto is taken up with an account of the game of Ombre. Pope first speaks of Hampton Court, where important decisions regarding state affairs are taken, and where Queen Anne "sometimes Counsel take—and sometimes Tea." Hampton Court is also famous for Balls, important visits, lectures and other such things.

Belinda meanwhile is anxiously waiting for two knights with whom she is going to play Ombre. The sylphs, faithful to their charge, now descend on each important card, to guard Belinda's fate. Even Ariel takes up his position. Pope then describes the arrangement of the cards : four Kings in Majesty rever'd..................four fair Queens whose hands sustain a Flow'r......Four Knaves in Garbs succinct."

Then follows a detailed and wonderful description of the game of Ombre. Pope actually personifies each and every card, and by this means, gives a vivid colour to the picture. Belinda finally wins the game, and "exulting fills with shouts the sky.

The board with Cups and Spoons is soon ready ; "The Berries crackle.........From silver spouts the grateful liquors

glide". The airy sylphs surround Belinda while she takes her meal ; some of them fan the fuming liquor when she sips, and others display their plumes over her lap.

But the Baron meanwhile is thinking of new stratagem. He cannot renounce his old intention of having the lock from Belinda's hair. He gets hold of a pair of scissors and tries to cut Belinda's lock. But the sylphs are always ready and guard her faithfully foiling thrice the attempt of the knight. Just then Ariel "sought the close recesses of the Virgin's thought," and was disappointed to find "an earthly lover lurking at her heart." He was so amazed that he found his "pow'r expir'd," and he gave up all attempts of guarding Belinda and retired.

The Baron was now lucky enough ; when he attempted, again, he succeeded in cutting a lock of Belinda's hair. Belinda raised a terrible hue and cry. "Not louder Shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast, when Husbands or when Lap-dogs breath their last." The victor however was overwhelmed with the joy of his success, and felt that he would be remembered for all times.

Critical Remarks : This Canto is written in a satirical vein. Pope's description of Hampton Court and the goings-on at the place is actually a terrible satire on contemporary upper-class life.

But more interesting is the description of the game of Ombre. We really feel, as we go on reading these lines, as if we ourselves were taking part in the game. Pope's method is practically gripping. He Personifies each card, and we can, as it were, visualize the four Kings, the four Queens, and the four Knaves.

Notes and Explanations

3. **A structure**—Hampton Court. It was built by Wolrey on the site of the manor house of the Knights Hospitallers.

4. In the time of William III, and Queen Anne, Hampton Court was frequently the scene of Cabinet meetings.

6. **Foreign tyrants**—Pope is thinking of Louis XIV, King of France who carried on a series of wars, the main object of which was to make him dictator of Europe.

7. **Three realms**—'England, Wales and Scotland' which were united in 1707.

8. **Tea**—'Tea' was pronounced 'tay' till towards the

middle of the eighteenth century, a pronunciation surviving still amongst the lower classes of England. Tea was a luxury in Pope's time.

9. **Dost...Tea**—Pope often attempts the effect of an anticlimax, as here, a ridiculous descent from the lofty to the common place. *Cf.* Swift's "Journal of a Modern Lady":

"Let me now survey
Our madam o'er her evening tea,
Surrounded with the noisy clans
Of prudes, coquettes, and harridans," etc.

16. **At every word...dies**—Pope points out here that scandal mongering is the business of these people.

17. **Snuff**—'Snuff-taking took its rise in England from captures made of vast quantities of Snuff by Sir George Rooke's expedition to Vigo in 1702." (Hayden's 'Dictionary of Dates').

33. **Matadore**—"One of the three principal cards in the games of Ombre and Quadrille, which are always the two black aces, and the deuce in spades and clubs and the sevens in hearts and diamonds". (Johnson).

38. **Whiskers**—'a tuft of Hair on the Upper Lip of a Man.'

41. **Succinct**—'Tucked or girded up." (Johnson.) *Cf.* Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' iii, 643:

"His habit fit for speed succinct."

42. **Halbert**—pole-axe. *Cf.* Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors' V. i. 185.

46. **Trumps**—'trump' is corruption of triumph.

47. The whole idea of this description of a game at Ombre, is taken from Vida's description of a game at chess, in his poem entitled 'Scacchia Ludus.'

49. **Spadillio**—The ace of spades; the first trump at Ombre.

51. **Manillio**—The deuce of trumps when trumps are black, the seven when they are red. The second trump at Ombre.

53. **Basto**—The Ace of Clubs, reckoned the third highest card. Spadillio, Manillio and Basto are the three principal trumps, called Matadores.

61. **Pam**—knave of clubs.

62. **Lu**—The game of Loo, in which Pam is the highest card.

66. **The field**—the battle, as in Milton's 'Paradise Lost' i. 105 :

"What though the field be lost ?
All is not lost."

71. **Boots**—avails. **The regal circle**—"the circle of my glory" (Shakespeare, 'King John', V. i. 2) : "the hollow crown that rounds the mortal temples of a king." (Richard II, III, ii. 161).

74. **The Globe**—The orb, a symbol of dominion usully accompanied by a sceptre.

80. **Strow**—A very common variant of 'strew'.

92. **Codille**—is a term in Ombre and Quadrille. When those who defend the pool make more tricks than those who defend the game they are said to 'win the codille.'

93. **In.........State**—'At some critical political juncture' (Holden).

100. **The long Canals**—The grounds of Hampton Court were laid out according to the Dutch taste.

106. **The Mill**—The coffee-mill. Coffee was introduced into England shortly before the middle of the seventeenth century.

107. **Shining Altars of Japan**—A bright Japanned stand. "All substances that are dry and rigid. or not too flexible, as woods, metals, leather, and paper prepared, admit of being Japanned." Japan ware was in great esteem at this time.

109. **Liquors**—the several cupfuls or draughts of liquor.

117-118. **Coffe..... eyes**—Pope used to drink a lot of coffee. Coffee was supposed to quicken the spirits and make the heart lightsome.

122. Vide Ovid's 'Metamorphosis' viii ; King Nisus, besieged in Megara by Minos, had a daughter Scylla. Now she fell in love with Minos, seeing him from a watch tower. The safety of Nisus and his kingdom depended on a purple hair which grew on his head. Scylla, in order to win the favour of Minos, plucked out this hair from the head of Nisus, and took it to Minos. But Minos abhorred her for impiety. After his victory Minos sailed away ; Scylla tried to cling to his ship, but was beaten off by Nisus, who had become an osprey. Scylla also became a bird.

147. **Forfex**—a pair of scissors.

152. *Cf.* Milton describes how Satan was cut asunder ; by Angel Kichael and beame soon reunited.

158. **When Husbands......lost**—Note again the anticlimax.

165. Expl : The 'New Atlantis', entitled "Secret Memoirs and Manners of several Persons of Quality of both Sexes, from the New Atlantis, an Island in the Mediterranean," published in 1709, was in fact a personal satire on certain families well-known at the time. It was written by Mary de la Riviere Manley, a lady of doubtful reputation, for whose play of 'Lucius,' Prior wrote a most impudent Epilogue. As a political journalist she co-operated with Swift and his Tory friends ; and both Swift and Smollett were as novelists under real obligations to her 'New Atlantis.' "Deceived by a false marriage, and then deserted and thrown upon her own resources, she sustained herself by writing and by 'intrigue.' She died in 1724. 'Atlantis, with a key to it,' was one of the works in Leonora's Library." (Spectator, No. 37.)

166. **The small pillow**—This was a richly decorated pillow which supported ladies in a sitting posture when they received visits in their bed chambers. The custom of so receiving visits was introduced from France.

173. **The labour of the Gods**—Poseidon and Apollo, the two gods, who had displeased Zeus, were doomed to serve Laomedon, king of Troy, for wages. Accordingly Poseidon built the walls of Troy, while Apollo tended the king's flocks on Mount Ida. The walls of Troy erected by a god, were destroyed by Spleen.

178. **Unresisted**—irresistible.

CANTO IV

Analysis—Belinda meanwhile was being oppressed with anxious care. The Poet thinks that "not even lovers robbed of all their bliss," or "ancient ladies when refused a kiss", could be more angry and resentful. This was because Umbriel, a mis chievous gnome, came down from the aerial heights, when Ariel and the other sylphs had withdrawn.

Now, this Umbriel came down in search of the gloomy Cave of Spleen. Here follows a wonderful description of this cave. "Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air, And screened in shades from Day's detested Glare. Spleen sighs for ever on her pensive Bed." The other attendants were Ill-nature (Her wrinkled form in Black and White array'd), Affectation,

who shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen, and there were also numerous bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.

Umbriel, the gnome, went past this strange throng and addressed Queen Spleen. He at first paid flattering compliments to Spleen, and then prayed to her to touch Belinda with Chagrin. The Goddess granted his prayer, and gave him a huge bag full of the 'Force of Female Lungs, Sighs, Sobs, and Passions; and the War of Tongues." She also filled a Vial with fainting Fears, soft Sorrows, melting Griefs, and flowing Tears. Umbriel was very glad, and bore her gifts away.

He found Belinda in a dejected mood and emptied the bag over her head. As a result of this Belinda began to burn with anger. The poet describes here the pitiable state of the ranging beauty. She asked Sir Plume to produce the lock of hair, by any means from the cruel baron. But being pressed by Sir Plume, the baron replied that he would never part with the lock and vowed that he would always wear it round his hand.

Not being content with this, Umbriel broke the vial which contained tears. Belinda, as a result of this, broke into tears. She remembered the morning of that fateful day, when she had her lock of hair stolen. She remembered how her toilet was interrupted by many ill omens, how she had seen a sylph warning her in her dream. She then bewailed the fate of the sister-lock which was now hanging down her neck alone.

Critical Remarks : The main part of this Canto is taken up with the description of the gloomy Cave of Spleen. The picture of Queen Spleen attended upon by wrinkled Ill-nature and Affectation, is really superb. The cause of Belinda's anger is also very realistically and minutely traced by Pope. He brings in the mischievous gnome, Umbriel, who goes to Spleen, and brings from her a bag full of "Sighs, Sobs, and Passions, and the War of Tongues". Then, as he empties the bag, Belinda starts showing all the signs of an angry lady ; she is thrown into a terrible fury.

In a typical mock-heroic style, Pope describes the pitiable state of Belinda. He compares her with great historical figures, and thus brings out the littlefness of the whole affair.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Cf.* Virgil's 'Aenied', iv. According to Dryden's translation :

"But anxious Cares already seiz'd the Queen."

6. **Ancient Ladies**—old maids.

8. **Awry**—cross-wise. **Manteau**—from French 'manteau', or from the Italian town of Mantua. It was 'a loose upper garment, now generally worn by women, instead of a straight-body'd Gown.' (E. Philips).

15. **Spleen**—melancholy, ennui, low spirits, hypochondria, ill-humour. It is also vulgarly called 'the blues' or 'the dismals'.

21. **Grotto**—cave or cavern. Expl.—The word 'grotto' is said to be a corruption of 'crypt.' Mr. Wedgwood, more probably, connects it with Fr. 'gratter', German 'grab,' English 'grave'. The termination is perhaps diminutival. Grottoes were ornamented in the grotesque style. Pope's grotto at his Twickenham house was a subterranean passage connecting his lawn (on the river bank) and his garden, which were separated by the road.

24. **Megrim**—from French 'migraine'. Megrim, or migraine is a 'Disorder of the head'. (Johnson). "The word is used in a plural form in the provinces, for whims, fancies, bad spirits." Megrim or migraine now means a paroxysmal headache, usually unilateral, attended with gastric and visual disturbances.

25. **Wait the throne**—wait upon the person on the throne, ready to receive orders.

30. **Lampoon**—originally a drinking—song. It is now used in the sense of a virulent satire.

43. **Snakes on rolling Spires**—*Cf.*, 'Paradise Lost', ix. 496-502.

45. **Elysian Scenes**—Elysium is the abode of the blessed in Greek mythology : hence blissful scenes.

46. **Angles in Machines**—Compare *Dues ex machina* i. *e*., a god (let down upon the stage) from the machine, being part of the furniture of the stage in an ancient Greek theatre. It is technically the intervention of some unlikely event in order to extricate one from difficulties.

47. *Cf.* Milton's 'Comus' 526-30. *Cf.* also Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy.' Part I Sec. ii. Mem. I Subs. 4 : "One thinks himself a giant another a dwarf ; one is as heavy as lead, another is as light as a feather......One fears heaven will fall on his head ; a second is a cock, and such a one Guianerius saith

he saw at Padua that would clap his hands together and crow. Another thinks he is a nightingale, and therefore sings all night long ; another he is all glass, a pitcher, and will therefore let nobody come near him," etc., etc.

51. **Pipkin**—a small earthen jar or pot. **Homer's Tripod**—See 'Iliad', xviii. 372-81. Pope's translation of lines 373—77 reads :

"Full twenty tripods for his hall he fram'd,
That, plac'd on living wheels of massy gold,
(Wondrous to tell) instinct with spirit roll'd
From place to place, around the blest abodes,
Self-mov'd, obedient to the beck of gods."

52. **Goose-pye**—'alludes to a real fact, a Lady of distinction imagined herself in this condition. (Pope).

55. **Past**—passed.

56. "Just as Odysseus was protected by his 'good antidote', so also the attendant here, *i. e.*, Umbriel, the gnome, declared himself protected by his root of haemony." **Spleenwort—a** fern of the genus—*Asplanium.*

58. **The sex**—most probably an abridgment of 'the fair sex.'

67. *Cf.* Chryses, prayer in 'Iliad,' i. 37-42.

69. **Citron-waters**—"Aqua vitae, distilled with the rind of citrons." (Johnson). See Swift's 'Journal of a Modern Young Lady' :

"And then to cool her heated brains,
Her night-gown and her slippers brought her,
Takes a large dram of citron-water"

77. **Chagrin**—vexation due to disappointment.

80. 'Finely intimating that wayward humour, which inclines people under the influence of this queen to mortify by refusal, even when the request is in unison with their own disposition.' (Wakefield.)

82. See Homer's 'Odyssey', x. 19 and 20.

89. Thalestris was the Amazonian Queen. She went with 300 women to meet Alexander the Great, under the hope of raising a race of Alexanders ; hence any bold heroic woman. Here she represents Mrs. Morley, sister of Sir George Brown, referred to as Sir Plume.

92. **Vent**—is generally a small opening ; (as we find in Shakespeare's 'Antony and Cleopatra', V. ii. 352.)

99. This particular imagery is taken from incarceration and torture. "The curl papers of ladies' hair used to be fastened with strips of pliant. lead." (Croker).

101. **Fillets**—headband, snood.

104. **Fops**—'Fop' and 'fopling' and 'beau' were the special words at this time for what at other times have been called 'buck', dandy'.

107. *Cf.* 'Iliad', xxii. 53, where Hecuba is foreseeing the death of Hector :

"Methinks already I behold thee slain,
And stretch'd beneath that Fury of the Plain."

109. **Toast**—'A celebrated woman whose health is often drunk'· (Johnson).

114. **Expos'd............eyes**—*i. e.*, examined minutely by a crystal-glass ; is made a public exhibit.

115. **Circling**—encircling.

118. **In the sound of Bow**—Expl. Pope here means to say that 'Wits take Lodgings' amongst the 'cits,' or in any sort of neighbourhood to Grub Street. The city was but one large butt for the jests of the 'wits'. While its immediate suburbs were the headquarters of that pinched and starved fraternity of scribblers between whom and Pope there was never peace.

121. **Sir Plume repairs**—Sir Plume is Sir George Brown. He was only one of the party who took the things seriously. He was angry that the Poet should make him talk nothing but nonsense. In fact, as we read the poem, and Pope's description of Sir Plume, we feel that Sir George was little to be blamed for what he complained. We might as well quote in this connection a few words from a letter written by Kestner to Goethe, concerning Kestner's own portraiture as Albert in Goethe's 'Sorrows of Werther', where he says : 'If you wanted to have him act so, need you have made him such a blockhead ?'

"The handle smooth and plain,
Made of the clouded olive's easy grain.

128. **Z—ds**—Zounds—corruption of 'God's wounds.'

135. *Cf.* Homer's 'Iliad' i. 234.

140. **Long-contended**—long contended for.

147. The speech here, is modelled on Achilles' lament for Patroclus, which occurs in 'Iliad', xviii, 107.

155. **Marks**—furrows, makes tract on.

156. **Bohea**—black tea.

162. **Patch-box**—a fancy box for holding the patches worn on the face generally having a mirror inside the lid. A patch is a small piece of black silk, struck by ladies on the face, to bring out the complexion by contrast common in the 17th and 18th centuries.

166. As were those Cassandra saw and announced. Nothing is more common in the poets, than to introduce omens as preceding some 'important and dreadful event'. (Warton).

167. **Hairs**—older writers often used the plural form, where nowadays, writers would use the singular in a collective sense.

169. **Break**—was pronounced '*breek*' in Pope's time.

Canto V

Analysis : The pitying audience melted in tears, hearing Belinda's word, but the guilty baron remained unmoved. Thalestris also tried to reproach him, but it was all in vain, 'for who can move when fair Belinda fails?' Clarissa then waved her fan and ordered silence. Soon Belinda started speaking again. She asked herself the question why beauties are praised and honoured. She concluded that all the glories due to beautiful ladies are vain, 'unless good sense preserve what beauty gains'. She ultimately decided to submit to her ill-luck, since women should keep good humour still whatever they might lose. She thinks finally that good humour can prevail when 'Airs, and Flights, and Screams, and Scolding fail'; 'Charms strike the Sight, but Merit wins the Soul.'

Strangely enough, such an emotional speech fell on dead ears; 'no applause ensued.' Finding all other means hopeless the 'fierce Virago' cried for war. Women armed with fans, and silk gowns, started fighting with their foes. Umbriel, the melancholy gnome, sat looking at the fight with pleasure. The other spirits also came along to see and assist the growing combat. Many beaus died at the sight of Thalestris' burning eyes.

Jove then suspended his golden scales to weigh Men's Wits against the Lady's Hair, and finally the 'Wits mount up, the Hairs subside.'

Belinda then flew at the guilty baron, and attacked him with 'a charge of snuff', which entered his nostrils and brought tears from his eyes. After this Belinda drew a deadly bodkin and the baron said that he was not at all disappointed at his

death, but he was only a bit upset, since he was leaving behind Belinda. Belinda meanwhile cried for the Lock. Her voice rang, rebounding through the vaulted roofs. The Lock was searched for, but it was to be found nowhere. Some thought that it was perhaps in the moon, since 'all things lost on Earth, are treasur'd there.'

But the poet assures us that his Muse had seen what actually happened to Belinda's lock of hair, "A sudden Star, it shot thro' liquid air, and drew behind a radiant Trail of Hair." The poet imagines that the beau-monde seeing this strange vision from the Mall might hail it with music ; and lover would perhaps take it for Venus and the wizard might predict the fatè of Louis or the fall of Rome.

Pope ends his poem by appealing to Belinda, not to be disappointed at her loss of the lock of hair, since it 'adds new Glory to the shining Sphere,' and since when she herself would die, this Lock "the Muse shall consecrate to Fame, And 'midst the Stars inscribe Belinda's name."

Critical Remarks : The last Canto is clearly a satirical piece. Here Pope allows Belinda to deliver an emotional speech, but "no applause ensu'd." The fight between the men and the women armed with fans and fiery glances follows. Their frowns kill a person and their smiles revive another. Pope ends the poem by giving us a picture of the fanciful position of the lock, drawn along by a 'sudden Star.' His final playful appeal to Belinda clearly reveals to us the purpose of the writing of the poem—to laugh the two estranged parties together again.

Notes and Explanations

6. See—Virgil's 'Aeneid', iv. 330. Dido, Queen of Carthage fell in love with Aeneas driven by a storm to the shores. He left the queen, and she burnt herself to death on a funeral pile.

7. A new character introduced in the subsequent editions, to open more clearly the moral of the poem, in a parody of the speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus in Homer."—Pope.

14. The ladies, it would appear, occupied the front boxes, the gentlemen the side. See "Epistle to Miss Blount, of Ramela" :

"She glares in balls, front boxes, and the Ring."

20. The small-pox was one of the most fearful plagues of society about this time. One of the chief terror of the day,

it is very frequently mentioned by the poets, see Dryden's lines 'Upon the Death of Lord Hestings,' his 'Ode on the Death of Mrs. Anne Killigrew,' Cartwright's lines 'On His Majesty's Recovery from the Small-pox."

23. **To patch**—to stick on the face a small piece of black silk or velvet or court plaster as the fashionable ladies of the 17th and 18th centuries used to do. **Ogle**—Expl. 'Ogle' is of the same root as English 'eye'; German 'auge,' Latin 'oculus,' etc. The word now is used in the sense of sidelong sly glances. Thus we find in the 'Spectator', No. 46, an Irish Gentleman announcing his intention of setting up for an ogling-master; "I teach the church ogle in the morning, and the playhouse ogle by candle light I have also brought over with me a new flying ogle fit for the Ring, which I teach in the dusk of the evening, or in any hour of the day by darkening one of my windows. I have a manuscript by me called the 'Complete Ogler', which I shall be ready to show you upon any occasion." *Cf.* Arbuthnot : "Jack was a prodigious ogler; he would ogle you the outside of his eye inward and the white upward."

34. **Strike**—produce an immediate impression on.

35. "It is a verse frequently repeated in Homer after any speech. **So spoke**—and all the Heroes applauded. (Pope).

36. **Prude**—is derived from the Latin 'prodis.' The old French form is 'prode,' feminine of 'prod,' *Cf.* Modern French 'prudhomme.' A prude is a woman who makes an affected show of modesty, propriety, primeness.

37. **Virago**—'A female warrior, a woman with the qualities of a man.' (Johnson).

40. 'Women are armed with Fans as Men with Swords, and sometimes do more Execution with them'. (Spectator, 102, which describes the practice of 'discharging' fans loud enough so that the sound produced therby, might resemble the 'Report of a Pocket-Pistol').

45. See Homer's 'Iliad', xx. 272-513.

47. **Mars**—"He means Ares. This identification of the Latin and Greek gods, and consequent treatment of their names as convertible, is a scarcely yet 'obsolete habit; but it is hoped that it is at last becoming so."

53. **Sconce**—According to Wedgewood, this word means

'a hidden light, a dark lantern.' Its origin is from the Low Latin 'absconsus', *Cf.* Dryden :

> "Golden sconces hang upon the walls
> To light the costly suppers and the balls"

60. **One dy'd......Song**—'Those eyes are made so killing.' *Killing* is a metaphor ; 'O cruel Nymph', a living death I bear—and this is a song (or poem).

62. Dapperwit is living up to his portraiture in Wycherley's "Love in a Wood".

63. **Sir Fopling**—is the chief character in Etherege's "Man of Model, or Sir Fopling Flutter".

64. Those are among the words of a song in the opera 'Camilla'. It was the most famous opera of Marc' Antonio Buononcini, brother of Handel's rival, and was first performed in England on 30th April, 1706. The song referred to is sung by Tullis in Act III and opens :

> "These eyes are made so killing,
> That all who look must dye."

65. **Meander**—is a river in Asia Minor, proverbial for its wanderings, rising in the south of Phrygia, close to the source of the Marsyas, flowing between Lydia, and Caria, of which it forms the boundary, and at last falling into the Icarian Sea between Myus and Priene. As a god Meander is described as the father of the nymph Cyane, who was the mother of Caunus. Hence the latter is called by Ovid 'Meandrius juvenis'.

> "Jove sets the Beam ; in either Scale he lays,
> The Champions Fate, and each exactly weighs.
> On this side Life, and lucky Chance ascends :
> Loaded with Death, that other Scale descends."

Pope here mocks the men, showing the wits of beaux outweighed by a lock of hair.

145. See 'Othello" II, iii. The handkerchief which was the first gift of Othello to Desdemona, was reported by Iago to be in possession of Cassio. Iago said that he saw Cassio wipe his beard with it. Now Othello broke into fury and swore vengeance upon Cassio and renounced all love for Desdemona.

113. **Lunar Sphere**—Milton too assails this old belief, which held the moon to be the place where the earth's rubbish was shot. See 'Paradise Lost, iii. 459-62.'

116. **Tweezer Cases**—Tweezers are small pincers for pulling out hairs.

117. **Death-bed alms**—*Cf.* 'Eloisa to Abelard', where Eloisa speaks of the founding of "these hallowed walls", from within she writes :

"No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,
Here brib'd the rage of ill-required heav'n."

122. **Tomes of Casuistry**—the works of the Schoolmen.

128. **Like a comet**—The original meaning of the word comet is "the long haired one."

129. **Bernice**—Daughter of Magas, king of Cyrene, and wife of Ptolemy III. She was put to death by her son Ptolemy IV. Philopator on his accession to the throne, 221. The famous hair of Berenice, which she dedicated or her husband's safe return from his Syrian expedition, was said to have become a constellation.

130. **Dishevell'd**—disordered hair.

131. **Kindling**—*Cf.* 'Isiah' xliii. 2 : "Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

133. **The Mall**—was the upper side of St. James's Park ; it was a favourite place for evening strolls.

136. **Rosamonda's Lake**—Expl. It was near where now stand the Wellngton Barracks. It was filled up in 1770. It was of oblong shape, and overhung by the trees of the Long Avenue. We find Swift writing to Stella in 1710 : "We are here in as smart a frost for the time as I have seen : delicate walking weather, and the Canal and Rosamonda's Pond full of the rabble sliding and with skaits, if you know what those are." According to Timbs, the name of the lake is derived from "the frequency of suicides committed here." But one can hardly believe that the water derived its name from this ghastly use of it. Rather it was so called because its banks were the haunts of lovers. The name occurs, according to Timbs, but we do not know on what authority he speaks, in "a grant of Henry VIII."

137. **Partridge**—Partridge was an almanac maker of the day, and was a favourite joke with the wits. Swift appears first to have selected him as the representative of the astrological fraternity in 'The Bickerstaff Papers'. In his 'predictions

for the year 1708', Swift says : "I have consulted the star of his (Partridge's) nativity by my rules, and find he will infallibly die on the 29th of March next about eleven at night of a raging fever ; therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time." There appeared presently : "The accomplishment of the first of Mr Bickerstaff's predictions, being an account of the death of Mr. Partridge, the almanac-maker, upon the 29th instant." Partridge protested he was not dead, but it was of no use. John Partridge himself used to predict in his Almanacs every year the downfall of the Pope, and the King of France, then at war with the English.

138. **Galileo's eyes**—Telescopes were first made by one Metius, at Alkmaer, and about the same time by Jansen, of Middleburge, about 1590-1609. "Galileo imitated their invention by its description, and made three in succession, one of which magnified a thousand times, 1630. With these he discovered Jupiter's moons and the phases of Venus. (Hayden's 'Dictionary of Dates.')

144. **Draw**—attract.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. How was the character of Pope's satire affected by his situation with regard to society in the period to which the Satires and Epistles belong ? What French writer mainly influenced Pope's style ? Compare the two satirists as regards the quality of their judgments.

Ans. Poetry, as we all know, is made by the poet in harmony with—or, if he is defiant, in antagonism to—the poetic ideals of the men with whom he mixes and for whom he writes. We have all heard of the spirit of the age—an intangible something that sets its mark upon all the works of the generation of men, their books, their architecture, their dress, their commercial enterprises, their institutions. The Poetic ideal is the working of this spirit upon poetry. A poet writes under the influence of a certain spirit, a certain social medium, which shapes and colours what he writes. In order to discover this we must look not only at the general character of his age, but also at the character of his immediate audience of the circle in which he moves. We must study his relations with them whether they are relations of harmony, as in the case of Pope, or relations of antagonism, as in the case of Byron ; we must also look at the details in connection with the spirit of the society for which Pope wrote. The spirits of this society accounts not only for much that was in Pope's poetry, but also for much that was in the two following generations because the traditions of this society were maintained after Pope's time, its spirit was transmitted—the dominant spirit in literature till the end of the century. There were revolts against it in the poetry of Thomson and Dyer, and Gray and Collins, and Burns and Cowper, but, on the whole, it maintained its hold. Its supremacy was not, indeed, shaken till Wordsworth and Byron raised the standard of rebellion, and majority at once in fact and gradually in open avowal, went over to them.

The society that imposed the laws of taste in poetry in Pope's time was, an aristocratic society, self-consciously so, as it could hardly fail to be when high and low, rich and poor, were marked off from each other by such conspicuous differences of dress and manners, as they moved about in their daily life. It was not self-consciously but superciliously aristocratic.

Sympathy with the simple feelings of unfashionable poor folk was rare in those days. Naturally in such society the ruling motive is fear of vulgarity, resulting in a disposition to denounce as vulgar whatever is done by people outside the pale of fashion.

Let us see then, how this prevalent motive would operate on poetry supposing the poet to be under its influence. It would affect both his choice of subjects and his manner of treating them. Nature, according to Pope, is "at once the source and test of art." But nature is an abstract term which each person interprets as meaning his own nature, and that must always be interpenetrated by the spirit of a man's social surrounding, the spirit prevalent among his companions. The Nature from which Pope chose his themes was either human nature, as he saw it in fashionable society, or human nature so treated as not to offend their susceptibilities. Pope's conception of Nature did not lead him to go, like Wordsworth, to simple country-people for his subject, and for his diction to "the natural language of man in a state of intense emotion." A casual metaphor in his 'Essay on Criticism'—"True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,"—takes us nearer to the centre of Pope's ideal of poetic expression, which was also the ideal of his age, than any other single passage in his writings.

Though Pope usually avoided easy elevations, he did think it necessary to use language which now seems affected and insincere. In this too Pope was influenced by the spirit of his age. Thus, we find many example of bad taste in his translation of Homer for Pope considered it necessary through the whole of that work to dress Homer to advantage for the fashionable society of Queen Anne's time.

There is one kind of Poetry, mock-heroic or heroi-comical, for which the elevated Queen Anne style is peculiarly suited—in which its affectation and insincerity are not felt as faults, because affectation and insincerity are part of the humour in which the poet writes. Pope's poetic diction is seen in one of its happiest application in the "Rape of the Lock", where trivial incidents, and little anxieties and interests, and pretty frivolities are purposely treated as matters of vast moment. Here also Pope found a theme well within the interests of his audience. The theme of the poem is directly suggested by the fashionable society of Queen Anne's days. Pope had a model

in Boileau's "Lutrin", a model as regarded the form, but the subject was fresh and new ; it came to him from breathing life, and was not laboriously sought.

In such a society naturally ; literature is in the main regarded under two aspects—as a political instrument and as an intellectual stimulant. The literary hero of these times will, therefore, not be intent upon pondering and revealing the depths of human nature ; nor a poet who from out of the turmoil of political conflicts or social distractions betakes himself into the secrecy of lyrical composition ; not even the singer who recounts or inspires great national actions. He will rather be the writer whose mind pierces just as deeply as suffices for the insight which society desires to enjoy into the characters of men and women, and who never forgets the special in the general. He will be, in form, an eclectic of eclectics, sworn to fidelity to no school, and founding none, but like the society with which he accords, correct within the limits of a self formed taste. He will, therefore, be master of that nicely chosen kind of allusions which is transparent to the educated intelligence ; avoiding illustrations either commonplace or far-fetched, sparing no pains to sustain the attention which he arouses, and to make sure of the effect which it is his purpose to create. One can easily see that controversy is the very breath in the nostrils of such a writer and at such an age.

Pope's satires, written in such an age, were naturally in essence a bit vindictive and malignant. His motives for writing the satires were partly spiteful and personal. The most prominent persons ridiculed in the 'Dunciad' can be shown to have given him offence. There was, however, another motive which was operating in his writings—an unscrupulous love of fun and delight in the creation of a humorous imagination. Pope was not a morose, savage, indignant satirist but airy and graceful in his malice, writing more in fun than in anger, revengeful, perhaps, and excessively sensitive, but restored to good-humour as he thought over his wrongs by the ludicrous conceptions with which that pride was consoled. He loved his own comic fancies more than he hated his enemies. His fun at the expense of his victims was so far cruel that he was quite regardless of their sufferings, probably enjoyed them ; but it was an impish and sprite-like cruelty, against which we cannot feel any real indignation, because it is substantially harmless, while its ingenious antics never fail to amuse.

Though De Quincey refuses to denominate Pope and his followers the 'French School', no student of English poetry can fail to see the influence of Boileau upon Pope's style. There are numerous direct imitations of Boileau in Pope's style. Thus we find in his famous 'An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot' an enumeration of the choice spirits for whose praise the poet cared. This gives effect by its contrast with the herd who decried him :

"......Granville the polite.
And knowing Walsh would tell me I could write ;
Well-natur'd Garth inflam'd with early praise
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd my lays ;..........."

(II. 135-38).

In this artifice Pope imitates Boileau (Ep. 7. 94). This is only one of the many examples of Pope's imitation of Boileau.

But the resemblance is much more general and diffused than that of single imitation. All that distinguishes Pope from his predecessors of the school of Dryden—his chastized severity of style, as opposed to their florid facility—is due to the example of Boileau. But while thus learning composition from Boileau, Pope neglected to learn what Boileau lays down as the rule of his poetry, *'Rien n' est beau que le vrai'* (*i. e.*, nothing is beautiful but truth). Boileau is a classic, not only by reason of his style, but in virtue of his judgments. His dicta are so many axioms. When he condemns or commands, it is the verdict of common sense that we hear. And Boileau never transgresses the bounds of legitimate criticism. He had no libels on his conscience. He did indeed rouse the anger of fashionable authors, and of grandees. Boileau, true to his ideal, refused to pay homage to false taste in writing, as well as to the noble patrons of that false taste. But he did it in tones of manly rebuke, or polished sarcasm. All the forms of eloquent raillery, and well-bred contempt, the keen strokes of wit which it is impossible to parry or to resent, these only are Boileau's weapons. Hence the classic durability of Boileau. Boileau is a standard at once for the language and the literature of France. His verdicts are unimpeachable, his decisions without appeal. His 'Satires and Epistles' have made an integral part of all liberal education in France. They do not require the qualifications and abatements which are necessary in putting Pope into the hands of the young.

"Pope represents many essential qualities of his age. Thoroughly in accordance with eighteenth-century standards is the imitation of the Ancients which he preached in his "Essay on Critcism", and practised in his later epistles. In the spirit of his age, too, are his insistence on 'the Rules of Poetry,' his belief that those Rules might be deduced from a close study of classical writers, his conviction that these writers had exhausted 'Nature', and that the Moderns could realize her through their medium, his constant inculcation of order and restraint, and his belief that these qualities could only find their highest expression in the end-stopped couplet. Yet this common matter is adapted to new ends with astonishing tact and skill. That each of these poems should rank as a masterpiece indicates at once the strength and the limitations of its author. It shows with what determination and success he could put his theories into practice ; but it also shows that his triumphs of his age could be compassed through sheer ingenuity......It is significant that, despite Pope's Homer, he, like Dryden and Johnson, was far more strongly influenced by Roman literature than by Greek. The reverse is the case when we pass to Keats and Shelley, each of whom was profoundly swayed by Greek thought and poetry. The resultant poetry manifests not only a new profundity and freedom, but an utterly changed out-look." (Sir Archibald Strong).

Q. 2. What advice did Addison give Pope with regard to recasting the 'Rape of the Lock' ? Was Pope justified in ascribing this advice to a bad motive ?

Ans. The first draft of 'The Rape of the Lock' appeared in May 1712. It is important to remember that the first version of 'The Rape of the Lock' consisted of two Cantos only, and that the poet declared the writing of these had taken him only a fortnight. Addison intervened at this point. He advised Pope against lengthening the poem, and it has been imagined that, since the longer version contained some of the greatest perfections to be found in Pope's verse. Pope believed the advice to be due to jealousy. This was the cause of the coolness between the two. Actually, however, Addison had no such motive. He, in his own way, was quite right. He was then looking at immediate necessity, which was to laugh away the clouds that had gathered around the quarrel between the family of Miss Arabella Fermor and that of Lord Petre. In this respect the

two Cantos were fairly sufficient. Addison was quite right in feeling that the further extension of the poem would hamper the immediate object of the poet, The real intention would lose its importance in the midst of the larger poem. In fact, any one reading 'The Rape of the Lock' to-day for the first time, without knowing the least about the origin of the poem, would certainly never bother about a lord's cutting off a lock of hair from the fair head of Miss Arabella Fermor. The average reader would appreciate only the poetic qualities of the poem, full of classical allusions and mock-heroic elements. So, we feel that Addison was justified in apprehending that the real object of the writing of the poem would lose its significance by the rewriting of the poem.

According to Edith Sitwell, it is far likelier that Pope was angry with Addison because of his attitude towards John Dennis when Pope undertook Addison's defence against Dennis. We shall have to trace the origin of this coolness between these two men back to the days of their friendship. Let us see how Edith Siiwell describes it :

"Pope was.........introduced to Addison, at Button's Coffee House, but the acquaintance never became a cordial one. The characters of the men differed too widely. Addison was good-hearted, perhaps a little too consciously so, was kind, but rather too deliberately open and just. He might be described as the first of a long line of literary cricketers, for he was always 'playing the game' or being manly and above guile about one thing or another. Manliness and uprightness were the keynote of that character which had been—as Pope told Spencer—destined to adorn the Church...........Pope might be regarded as the antithesis of this character ; for although he spent a large part of his life in doing kindnesses, and although he was the truest and loyalest of friends, he had the unfortunate inhibition against speaking the truth to which I have referred ; and this did not agree with Addison's cricketing spirit. Again, Addison did not enjoy the presence of an equal or a master mind ; he must be the first of his circle, therefore, Pope's acquaintance with the great Addison did not develop into friendship, and even the acquaintanceship was of a cool order."

So we can see that from the very beginning the relations

between Pope and Addison were rather too cold. This naturally led to the further estrangement between the two. It seems that Pope was actually looking for an excuse for cutting off his relations with Addison, and he found one in Addison's advice to him regarding the length of 'The Rape of the Lock.' This was sheer mistrust on the part of Pope. He was by nature very suspicious, and this tendency made him suspect even his best friends. So Pope was quite unjustified in ascribing Addison's honest advice, which was given in good faith, to a bad motive.

Q. 3. What incident suggested the poem—'The Rape of the Lock' ?

Ans. *See Introduction*—Occasion of the Poem.

Q. 4. Addison praised the 'Rape of the Lock' on its first appeara nce as 'merus sal', a bit of pure wit. What is your view ?

Ans. The exquisite raillery with which the poem perpetually sparkles, the familiarity which it exhibits with the epics of antiquity, and the use to which that familiarity is turned, the finished case of its style, all at once connect it with the age which produced it.

"The 'Rape of the Lock' is correctly termed by its author a heroi-comical poem and belongs distinctly to that class of composition which we call 'burlesque'. In other words, it applies a peculiar kind of treatment to a subject palpably and therefore ludicrously undeserving of it. It differs from poems which are mere parodies on other poems, in as much as it burlesques or mocks an entire class of poetry ; and herein lies its superiority to a mere travesty, such as the 'Batrachomyemachia'. As its true predecessors, Warton notes the 'Rape of the Bucket' (1612) by Alessandro Tassoni, and two other similar Italian works. With Boileau's 'Lutrin' (translated into English by Rowe in 1708) the 'Rape of the Lock' has in common both nature of subject and method of treatment—a trivial quarrel humorously dignified with epical importance. But while the French poem almost rises to the level of a national satire, the English is rather to adopt Roscoe's expression, a social 'pleasantry'." (Sir Adolphus William Ward).

'The Rape of the Lock' is not only a satire on society, it is a witty parody of the heroic style in poetry. Even the verse

form is treated humorously, especially through its tendency toward anticlimax, as in the lines,

> "Here thou, great Anne ! whom three realms obey,
> Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea."

"The Rape of the Lock" introduces us to a little world of frivolity and fashion, busy with its pleasures, its dressing, flirting and card-playing, in the old London of Queen Anne, Pope suggests to us the vanity and shallowness of this life ; and, by celebrating its inanities with the lofty dignity of the Homeric epic, he insensibly leads us to measure this petty world by the large standards of the heroic age. Yet the poem is not only a satire on the trivial ; it affects us also as a travesty on the sublime, and its wit consists largely in placing the sacred or the admirable on a seeming equality with the trifling or the absurd. We are amused because all ordinary standards are changed, because we hear in the same breath of the State counsels, and the tea-drinking of a queen, of the deaths of husbands and of lap-dogs, of the neglect of prayers, and the loss of masquerade.

The witticism in 'The Rape of the Lock', has to be studied in the perspective of the age of Pope. As Louis Cazamian says, "As often happens at this epoch, the aspiration after a big subject, not being sustained by a strong creative mood, stops half-way at the compromise of a mock-heroic attitude of the writer, tends to make him critical, and of a modern turn of mind, while on the other hand, his doctrine forces upon him the imitation of ancient models, the gravity of an aesthetic cult ; this forced respect, this obsession of the past, imply a constraint, and the spirit of the time finds a subterfuge in imitating antiquity in a vein of mockery. The abundance of the mock-heroic type of literature betrays an instinctive effort in the world of letters to reconcile a little independence with a dogmatic orthodoxy, and to introduce an element of novelty into an imitative art."

Cazamian continues, "The ingenuity, the wit, an often striking verbal felicity ; an occasional note of true imaginative poetry, in the pretty fancy of the sylphs ; the skilful handling of the conclusion, discreetly hinted ; shafts of satire which, though light, yet penetrate...cannot make us forget that the laboured application of this art is here excessive, or efface prolix passages, traces of vulgarity, the musky atmosphere of a

fashionable elegance, to the prestige of which the poet bows when he claims to dominate it".

This exactly is the defect of Pope's use of wit in 'The Rape of the Lock'. His workmanship is rather too crude and evident. Moreover his attempts at wit, often border on the verge of vulgarity and become repulsive. This of course was not Pope's fault. For he was wholly dominated by the instincts of his age.

Perhaps the poem is not everywhere so charming as it looks. A certain contempt for Belinda and her sex peers out from behind the compliments ; Pope writes as though the lady will never have the wit to feel his scratches. Nor is the Cave of Spleen the happiest of fancies. But otherwise all is 'airy substance' and gay mischief. There is more pure poetry than in any other of Pope's works ; and it is brought in, of course, by the sylphs, who were introduced in the revision at the instance of Addison.

"In his smooth and polished verse," says Hazlitt about Pope's poetry, "we meet with no prodigies of nature, but with miracles of wit, the thunders of his pen are whispered flatteries, its forked lightnings pointed sarcasms ; for the 'gnarled oak', he gives us 'the soft myrtle' ; for rocks and seas, and mountains, artificial grass-plots, gravel-walks, and tinkling rills ; ....". Of 'The Rape of the Lock,' Hazlitt says, "It is the most exquisite specimen of 'filigree' work ever invented.........The balance between the concealed irony and the assumed gravity is as nicely trimmed as the balance of power in Europe. The little is made great, and the great little. You hardly know whether to laugh or weep. It is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly. It is the triumph of the mock-heroic !......The 'Rape of the Lock' is a double-refined essence of wit and fancy......".

Q. 5. 'The Rape of the Lock' is the "most exquisite specimen of 'fillagree' work ever invented"—Hazlitt. What does Hazlitt mean ? filigree

Ans. The word 'filigree' or 'fillagree', actually means something delicate or ornamental. Hazlitt's description of the poem would be more clear if we quote a few words from Edith Sitwell's essay on 'The Rape of the Lock.' According to her 'The Rape of the Lock,' is a "miracle of the summer air, airy

and glittering as the nest of the summer light and early dew over the strawberry bed—a poem so airy that it might have been woven by the long fingers of the sylphs in their dark and glittering Indian gauzes fleeting like a little wind among the jewelled dark dews on the leaves of the fruit trees." This gives us the impression of a delicate fairy-land, where everything is woven of dreams.

Hazlitt too further explains what he means by the word 'fillagree.' According to him, the poem "is made of gauze and silver spangles. The most glittering appearance is given to everything, to paste, pomatum, billet-doux, and patches. Airs, languid airs, breathe around :—the atmosphere is performed with affection. A toilet is described with the solemnity of an altar raised to the Goddess of Vanity, and history of a silver bodkin is given with all the pomp of heraldry. No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, splendour of poetic diction, to set off the meanest things......You hardly know whether to laugh or weep. It is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly." After this Hazlitt quotes two verses from the poem in order to expound his view. He mentions the famous stanza which describes Belinda in the beginning of the second Canto, and also the introduction to the account of Belinda's assault upon the baron bold, who had dissevered one of these locks 'from her fair head for ever and for ever' which occurs in the fifth Canto.

It seems, in fact, that never has fancy shimmered with a more delicate and indecent bloom than in Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock.' The world of 'The Rape of the Lock' is ethereal, impalpable, spun out of gossamer and dew, yet strangely consistent and credible. Let us take also the case of the sylphs in the poem. Their kingdom is of shadows which reproduce in miniature the structure of human society. What plausibility there is in every detail, worked out with an unfaltering instinct for just and delicate gradation !

This dream-like, delicate quality of the poem is mainly due to the sub-plot of the sylphs. The world of the sylphs, which Pope added later to the original two Cantos, reminds us of the fairy-land of 'The Midsummer Night's Dream.'

As we all know, the poem is the story of a day in the life of a London beauty. We follow Belinda all along, from

the beginning of her toilet, through the game of Ombre, and coffee, until we reach the tragic catastrophe of the severed curl. Where can we find so light, so poetical, a treatment of things which we think of as trivial or ordinary ? Here is the epic of the frivolous. Pope actually suggests to us the vanity and shallowness of this life ; and, by celebrating its inanities with the lofty dignity of the Homeric epic, he insensibly leads us to measure this petty world by the large standards of the heroic age.

So, the delicate, 'fillagree' element of 'The Rape of the Lock', is quite evident now. Pope made an epic out of practically nothing. The very idea of writing an epic on 'the rape of a lock of hair' shows us to what extent poetic fancy would go. A great work of art can be made even out of bare insignificant raw materials.

Q. 6. Gosse writes of 'The Rape of the Lock'—"Its faults, a certain hardness and want of sympathy, are the faults of the age." Discuss.

Ans. Let us first see what are the faults of 'The Rape of the Lock'. 'The Rape of the Lock' introduces us to a little world of frivolity and fashion, busy with its pleasures, its dressing, flirting, and card-playing, in the old London of Queen Anne. The life described here is not the life of the nation, but of a little group of idlers in the town. This is a significant defect of the poem. We are allowed to see only a part of the vast national life of those days. Yet Pope was representative in this very narrowness. In these days, fashion, wit, literature, and politics met in London. There—men thought—was the life of England ; outside, lay a vague region, little thought of and seldom visited ; a dull place with stupid squires, and muddy roads, where every one was behind the times. Town was supreme, and Pope represented the town and its supremacy. So we see that Pope's defects were also representative of his age.

Pope's character was not a great one. We listen in vain in his 'The Rape of the Lock' for the deeper notes of individual human experience. But his lack of absorption in his inner life made him morbidly sensitive in his superficial contact with the world. As a result of this, we find in his poem bitter contempt for people. Much of his scornfulness, wholly justifiable as criticism, in his great satires, has the sourness of a

personal grievance. We are left to wonder how his acquaintance stood Pope's ordeal. They must have continually felt themselves in front of a masked battery of spitfire suspicion, ready at any moment, on any or no pretext, to open and shatter them to pieces. but this attitude was also essentially of the particular age in which Pope was born. "The literary hero of these times will......not be a mind intent upon pondering and revealing the depths of human nature ; nor a poet who from out of the turmoil of political conflicts or social distractions betakes himself into the secrecy of lyrical composition ; not even the singer who recounts or inspires to great national actions. He will rather be the writer whose point pierces just as deeply as suffices for the insight which society desires to enjoy into the characters of men and women, and who never forgets the special in the general." (Sir Adolphus William Ward). So this was the reason for the want of sympathy and hardness which we find in his poem. It appears that he cares for none. He does not even seem to bother whether his shafts of satire really hit Miss Arabella.

Pope's poetical deficiencies were as deeply rooted. For wild, natural beauty he had no genuine feeling. With freedom for the most part from incongruous absurdities, the barrenness of his favourite Pastorals is dreadful. This also had its origin in the age of Pope. As we have already seen, a special characteristic of those days was the neglect of nature. So the artificial stiffness of the town was naturally reflected in his poems.

A first impression of Pope is of a satirist visiting the blame for his many infirmities and privations on the whole of society, and finding in his habitual nature an instrument, dedicated to his vindictiveness. It is indisputable that he commonly used criticism as a hangman's noose.

In conclusion, let us glance at another aspect of the criticism of Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock'. We refer to Mr. Taine's criticism. This is how Professor Minto attacks Taine for his unjust criticism of Pope's poetry : "This poem (The Rape of the Lock)......strikes M. Taine as a piece of harsh, scornful, indelicate buffoonery. For him it is a mere succession of oddities and contrasts, of expressive figures, unexpected and grinning—an example of English insensibility to French sweetness and refinement. What especially offends his delicate

sense is the bearishness of Pope's laughter at an elegant and beautiful woman of fashion. Pope describes with a grin on his face all the particulars of the elaborate toilet with which Belinda prepared her beauty for conquest, and all the artificial airs and graces with which she sought to bewitch the heart of susceptible man. The Frenchman listens without sympathy, without appreciation, with the contemptuous wonder of a well-bred man at clownish buffoonery. He sees nothing to laugh at in a woman's spending three hours over her toilet………"

"The main defects" of the poetry of eighteenth century poets, according to Minto "can be traced to one source—the character of the audience for whose judgment they had respect, by whose ideals they were controlled, who were the arbiters of taste. The standard of taste in the time of Queen Anne, and till near the end of the century, was that of a self-consciously aristocratic and refined society, self-conscious of their superior manners and superior culture, and disposed to treat the ways of the vulgar with amused contempt. This I think, can be shown to be at the root of the striving after wit and the respect for established models, the false theory of poetic diction in serious poetry. Fear of being vulgar, fear of being singular,—these were the real nightmares that sat upon eighteenth-century poetry.

Q. 7. All Pope's stock of phrases is but "a parade of gallantry which betrays indelicacy and coarseness...the wit is no wit ; all is calculated, combined, artificially prepared".—Taine. Do you agree ?

Ans. See Answer to Question 6.

Q. 8. Characterize 'The Rape of the Lock' as a moral satire.

Ans. 'The Rape of the Lock' is not only a witty parody of the heroic style in poetry, but it is also a satire on the society of his day. This constitutes the moral aspect of the poem. Pope satirizes through the poem the vanity and shallowness of this life. In the 'Gulliver's Travels' of Swift, ideas are physical relations ; we see a man become a giant among pygmies, a pygmy among giants ; in 'The Rape of the Lock' we are entertained by a similar reversal of our moral and

spiritual ideas, and in its tolerant cynicism the petty becomes great, the great petty.

(See also *introduction.*)

Q. 9. How does the 'Rape of the Lock' satisfy the conditions of a mock-heroic poem ?

Ans. See *Introduction*—The mock-heroic style.

Q. 10. Comment on the classical allusions in the poem.

Ans. 'The Rape of the Lock' abounds in classical allusions. This was but only to be expected, 'since the models of the eighteenth century poets were the Greek and Italian classical authors. The main bulk of the classical allusions which are practically strewn all over the poem, is in the part where the sylphs are introduced. Thus, in the very first Canto, towards the beginning of the poem, we find a typical classical name for the sun :

> "Sol thro' white Curtains shot a tim'rous Ray."

Then again, we come across a brilliant classical allusion in Canto III, *ll.* 122-24 :

> "Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's Fate !
> Chang'd to a Bird, and sent to flit in Air,
> She dearly pays for Nisus' injured Hair !"

The story of Scylla, the daughter of King Nisus, occurs in Ovid's 'Metamorphosis'.

(For details, see *Introduction*).

